

QUICK WORK

Koh Kong province has 7,000 jobs ready for returnees, provides power supply cut by Thais

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Koh Kong province—one of Cambodia's border provinces with Thailand—is preparing to accommodate a potential influx of returning Cambodian migrant workers, with more than 7,000 jobs just waiting to be filled by the returnees.

Speaking in an interview yesterday, Koh Kong Governor Mithona Phouthong said authorities have also fully restored power to the border area whose electricity supply was cut off by Thailand on June 12.

She said more than 7,000 job vacancies are currently available in the province, including 2,700 positions in the Koh Kong Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and 5,000 more in the Koh Kong Zhejiang SEZ, where 17 factories have been registered under the Council for the Development of Cambodia.

The Koh Kong SEZ is located on Cambodia's western seaboard, about 233 kilometres from the main port in Sihanoukville.

“We urgently need a workforce to fill the current shortfall,” she said, urging returning Cambodian workers from Thailand not to worry, as “ample job opportunities are waiting for them.”

Synopsis: Border province ready to welcome returning migrant workers with thousands of employment opportunities amid territorial spat with Thailand.

Mithona said workers at the Koh Kong Zhejiang SEZ can earn a minimum wage of \$300, along with accommodation and transport from their lodgings to the workplace.

Alongside receiving returnees at border checkpoints, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT) officials are offering technical and vocational training programmes for returnees to upgrade their skills for sustainable employment in Cambodia, reducing reliance on migration to Thailand.

Her statements come amid rising tensions at the Thai-Cambodian border, where Thai ultra-nationalist groups have reportedly issued threats and made discriminatory remarks toward Cambodian workers, following a diplomatic dispute between the two countries.



Cambodian migrant workers register for jobs in Koh Kong province, at the Cham Yeam Border Checkpoint. Polytechnic Institute of Koh Kong Province

In a statement on Monday, Prime Minister Hun Manet instructed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Prak Sokhonn to coordinate with Cambodian consular officials in Thailand to facilitate legal documentation for workers wishing to return home.

Prime Minister Hun Manet and former Prime Minister Hun Sen, the current Senate President, have expressed full support for Cambodian workers returning home, saying those who wish to come back must be welcomed.

Cambodian migrant workers make up a significant portion of Thailand's labour force, especially in the industrial, construction, agricultural, and service sectors.

The MLVT reiterated on Monday that it is fully prepared to receive returning workers, offering both employment opportunities and access to technical and vocational training to support their reintegration.

Mithona said her province is also well-prepared for any emergency that may arise amid the ongoing military standoff between Cambodia and Thailand.

“Electricity supply from Thailand was cut off on June 12, but we have since restored full electricity to the border area using our own resources,” she said.

Cambodia on Tuesday announced a ban on all imports of Thai fruits and vegetables, in response to Thailand's refusal to comply with Mr Hun Sen's ultimatum to fully reopen its border checkpoints.

The Koh Kong Provincial Department of Labour and Vocational Training said yesterday



Cambodian workers returning from Thailand are provided with job listings by official from the Polytechnic Institute of Koh Kong province, at the Cham Yeam Border Checkpoint.

Polytechnic Institute of Koh Kong Province

that MLVT, in collaboration with the National Employment Agency (NEA), National Social Security Fund (NSSF), and the provincial Labour Department, have deployed their officials to the Cham Yeam Border Checkpoint and the Transit Centre.

The coordinated presence of these institutions aims to provide comprehensive support and information to Cambodian migrant workers returning from Thailand. This initiative reflects the government's concerted efforts to facilitate reintegration and ensure the well-being of its citizens abroad.

The officials offer guidance on a wide range of services, including job opportunities, access to technical and vocational training, and NSSF benefits. The services are designed to equip returnees with the resources and knowledge to re-enter the local workforce and

access social protection.

The campaign underscores the government's commitment to supporting Cambodian nationals who choose to return home, ensuring they are not left behind in the country's economic and social development.

Under the direction of the MLVT, the NEA has deployed mobile job centres to Banteay Meanchey province to register the former migrant workers for jobs and skills training in Cambodia.

According to the NEA, more than 230,000 job opportunities are available in Cambodia's manufacturing and corporate sectors.

On Sunday, Senate President Hun Sen called on Cambodian workers in Thailand to return home, backing the government's directive for all of its agencies to assist in their repatriation. ■

Thailand protests against leaked phone chat between leaders

Synopsis: Thailand has lodged a formal diplomatic complaint against Cambodia over the release of a private conversation between its Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and Senate President Hun Sen, accusing Phnom Penh of breaching diplomatic norms and undermining bilateral trust.

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The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs has formally lodged a diplomatic complaint against Cambodia, condemning Senate President Hun Sen's decision to release the full contents of a private phone conversation between him and Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra.

The leaked message sent shockwaves through Thailand's political landscape, casting doubt over Paetongtarn's grip on the premiership.

Cambodian Ambassador to Thailand Hun Saroeun was summoned to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday to receive a protest letter expressing extreme disappointment with the actions of the Cambodian leader, which it described as "a violation of universal principles of international relations", over the leaking of a private phone conversation between Mr Hun Sen and Paetongtarn.

"All actions taken were driven by the intention to protect national sovereignty, safeguard the interests, and ensure the safety of Thai citizens both in Thailand and residing in Cambodia," read the statement from the Thai government.

"When it became evident that the Cambodian side lacked sincerity and mutual respect in cooperating to resolve the issue, the Thai government ordered its security forces to prepare for national threats."

"Appropriate measures will be implemented in due course," the statement added.

In the letter of complaint, the Thai government expressed disappointment that the private telephone

conversation between the Thai Prime Minister and the senior figure from Cambodia was leaked to the media.

"Trust and respect between the two leaders are fundamental to good neighbourliness and conduct among states," it read. "Such actions contradict internationally accepted practices and will severely affect ongoing efforts for both sides to resolve the problem in good faith."

In a press conference yesterday, Nikorndej Plangoon, Director-General of the Department of Information and spokesman for Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that the Thai government considers the public dissemination of the private conversation to be unacceptable.

"The act is not only against the basic principles of state-to-state engagement but also undermines mutual trust, which is critical for maintaining constructive bilateral relations," he said.

He said the incident has already had a damaging impact on Thailand-Cambodia relations, particularly regarding ongoing efforts to address sensitive issues through internationally recognised bilateral mechanisms.

"Regardless of who serves as prime minister, they represent the Thai government and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect," Nikorndej said.

Khmer Times was unable to reach Cambodia's Foreign Affairs Ministry yesterday for comment.

Mr Hun Sen, in a social media post before the release of the full conversation on Wednesday, implied that he was not responsible for the leak of the first audio clip, which was nine minutes long.

"As is customary, in order to avoid any misunderstanding or



Director-General of the Department of East Asian Affairs Piyapak Sricharoen (R) summons Cambodian Ambassador to Thailand Hun Saroeun to his office to receive a diplomatic letter of protest from Thailand. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand

misrepresentation in official matters, it was necessary to record the conversation for the sake of transparency, including for internal Cambodian purposes," the Senate President, who is also Cambodian People's Party (CPP) president, wrote.

"I have since shared the audio recording of the conversation between myself and the Thai Prime Minister with approximately 80 individuals, including members of the party's standing committee, Senate working groups, National Assembly teams, the foreign affairs task force, education and outreach units, border affairs groups, and members of the armed forces.

"Among these individuals, it is possible that someone disapproved of the Thai Prime Minister. A few hours after our conversation, the Thai leader publicly accused the Cambodian leadership of conducting 'unprofessional' politics and engaging in political activity via Facebook, an action that contradicts their words," he added.

Chea Thyrieth, spokesman for Mr Hun Sen and the CPP, has firmly dismissed allegations from the Thai side that Mr Hun Sen leaked their private conversation to gain political popularity.

In a voice message shared on the Senate and CPP Telegram channels, Thyrieth stated that Mr Hun Sen and Prime Minister Hun Manet do not need to seek popularity as they already hold the deep respect and affection of the Cambodian people.

"The popularity of Samdech Techo [Hun Sen] and Samdech Thipadei [Hun Manet] has long been established in the hearts of the Khmer people. There is no need to seek more," he said. "The Cambodian people support and love Samdech Techo for his wise and strategic leadership in safeguarding the nation from foreign aggression."

On Sunday, in a special message delivered before a Senate meeting, Mr Hun Sen confirmed that he had just had a phone conversation with the Thai premier on the heated border issue. He added that the phone conversation had led to the Cambodian government's decision to delay by 24 hours a ban on the import of Thai fruit and vegetables through the Kingdom's border, in response to Thailand's unilateral restrictions on border entry from Cambodia in the past week.

The leak, initially circulating in a nine-minute version, was confirmed on Wednesday by Mr Hun Sen, who

later released the full 17-minute conversation. It reveals Paetongtarn urging him to ignore alleged interference by a Thai military commander, asking for sympathy, and appealing for bilateral calm as public protests grow in Thailand.

"I want you (Hun Sen) to have some sympathy for me because people in Thailand are already saying that I should go and become prime minister of Cambodia," Paetongtarn is heard saying through a Cambodian translator, Phnom Penh deputy Governor Khliang Huot.

"Honestly, if you want anything, just tell me—I will take care of it."

She accused a regional military commander—identified as the leader of Thailand's Military Region 2—of inciting unrest and damaging diplomatic ties with Cambodia.

"I don't want you to listen to the other side, like the Thai Army's Region 2 command," Paetongtarn said. "If you listen to them, I don't want you to feel upset or angry because that is not our intention at all."

In the recording, Mr Hun Sen is heard denying her request for the negotiations to ease border restrictions

More on page 3 ►



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Hun Sen's diplomacy praised for boosting foreign relations

Synopsis: Senate officials have credited former Prime Minister Hun Sen's parliamentary diplomacy with enhancing national peace, stability, and foreign relations. During a forum held at the Senate and attended by media professionals, Chem Widhya, Chair of Commission 5, emphasised the Senate's growing international engagement under Hun Sen's leadership as Senate President.

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A senior Senate official has confirmed that former Prime Minister Hun Sen's parliamentary diplomacy has played a vital role in promoting peace, maintaining national stability, and deepening Cambodia's relations with friendly nations.

The Senate's Commission on Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and Information (Commission 5), in collaboration with the Club of Cambodian Journalists, hosted a public dissemination event yesterday to brief members of the press on the outcomes of Cambodia's parliamentary diplomacy.

The forum, held at the Senate building, was chaired by Chem Widhya, Chairman of Commission 5, and Puy Kea, President of the

Cambodian Club of Journalists. Officials from the Senate Secretariat attended the event, as did members of Commission 5, and approximately 70 national and international journalists representing 60 media outlets.

In his keynote presentation, Widhya—a veteran diplomat—outlined Cambodia's evolving parliamentary diplomacy under the current leadership of the Senate, highlighting its role in fostering bilateral and multilateral relations through international forums.

During Mr Hun Sen's leadership in the 5th legislative term of the Senate, two main priorities were established: advancing parliamentary diplomacy and enhancing engagement with electoral institutions. Widhya emphasised that Hun Sen remains deeply committed to diplomacy, despite no longer serving as Prime Minister.

At present, in his role as President of the Senate—a legislative institution—Samdech Techo has actively strengthened and expanded the Senate's political influence, particularly through robust and effective parliamentary diplomacy," he said.

He said that this initiative seeks to enhance inter-parliamentary cooperation with global legislative bodies, thereby strengthening Cambodia's diplomatic ties with partner nations.

The 5th Senate legislature, led by Mr Hun Sen, comprises 62 members—58 elected through indirect elections (55 from the Cambodian People's Party and three from the Khmer Will Party) and four appointed members (two by the King and two by the National Assembly).

Under Mr Hun Sen's leadership, the Senate has enhanced its prestige



Chairman of the Senate's Commission on Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and Information, Chem Widhya, speaks during the public dissemination forum at the Senate yesterday. **KTI/Heng Chivoan**

and effectiveness, thereby contributing to the advancement of liberal democracy, national development, and effective governance. It fulfils its constitutional mandate through three functions: legislation, oversight, and representation.

Attendees viewed a video on the history and significance of the

Senate building in Cambodia's political evolution.

During the Senate's inaugural session in early 2024, officiated by King Norodom Sihamoni, Mr Hun Sen emphasised the Senate's vital role in international relations by appointing experienced diplomats for the 5th mandate. ■

Thai PM apologises for leaked Cambodia audio

From page 2▶

and demanded Thailand lift its border restrictions before Cambodia would consider any negotiation or reversal of its import bans.

"We don't negotiate," Mr Hun Sen told Paetongtarn. "They caused the problem and now want to look good. They must act first. We can promise that five hours after the border is open, we will lift the ban on fruits and vegetables. I guarantee that with my head."

He also criticised Thailand's previous troop deployments at the Mom Bei border area, which Cambodia viewed as provocative.

The viral recorded conversation prompted public outcry and finger-pointing in Bangkok. Paetongtarn later confirmed the authenticity of the clip but accused Mr Hun Sen of politicising the private exchange.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday alongside Defence Minister Phumtham Wechayachai and her secretary-general, Prommin Lertsuridet, Paetongtarn confirmed the authenticity of the recording and defended her remarks as part of an informal peace effort.

"I tried to calm Mr Hun Sen using an off-the-record approach in a private conversation," she said.

"The talking technique should not have been revealed."

"I feel that I have the goal to maintain national peace. I used soft words," Paetongtarn added. She also confirmed that she customarily referred to Mr Hun Sen as "uncle" during their informal discussions.

However, she expressed disappointment over the leak, accusing Mr Hun Sen of violating the trust and confidentiality of their diplomatic communication.

"The relationship must now change," Paetongtarn said. "There will be no more private conversations between me and Mr Hun Sen."

Also on Wednesday, Thailand's Bhumjaithai Party officially announced its withdrawal from the ruling coalition, citing national sovereignty concerns following the controversial phone conversation between Paetongtarn and Mr Hun Sen.

Several other political parties, including the Thai Sang Thai Party and the Palang Pracharath Party, called for Paetongtarn to take full responsibility for the incident and resign from her premiership, accusing her of causing Thailand to "lose its national honour, dignity, and standing among the people and the armed forces".

Yesterday morning, upon chairing an emergency meeting, Paetongtarn issued a public apology to Thai citizens.

"I would like to apologise for the leaked audio of my conversation with a Cambodian leader which has caused public resentment," Paetongtarn told reporters at a news conference, where she was joined by top defence and military officials.

"We don't have time for infighting. We have to protect our sovereignty. The government is ready to support the military in all ways," she said. ■

Cambodia, Malaysia boost bilateral ties on tourism and culture

Synopsis: Senate President Mr Hun Sen, met with Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia, to enhance cooperation in tourism and culture.

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President of the Senate Hun Sen, met with Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia and his delegation, for a working discussion to strengthen bilateral relations, especially in tourism and culture, yesterday morning.

According to Senate Spokesperson Chea Thyrieth, Mr Hun Sen welcomed the Malaysian delegation, and considered the visit, as a step forward in deepening Cambodia–Malaysia ties and promoting further cooperation in tourism and cultural sectors.

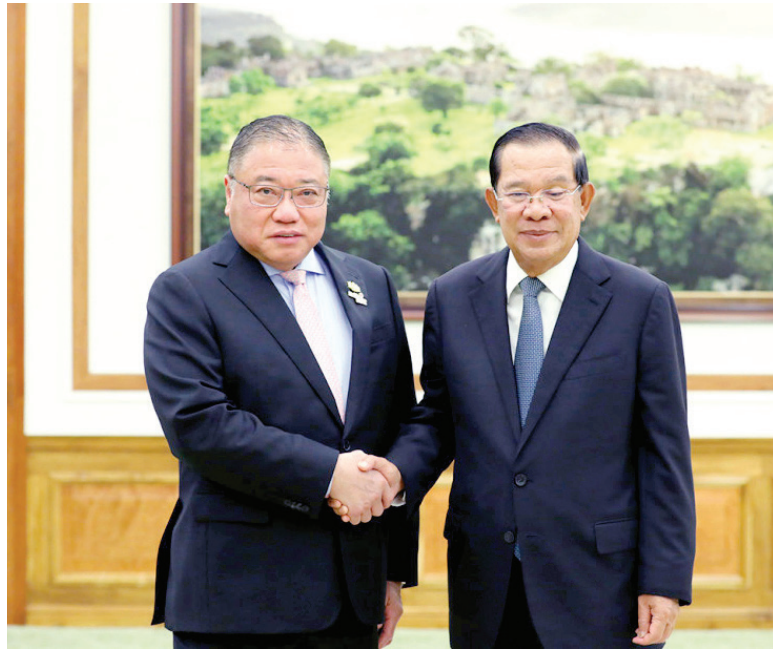
Tiong expressed his gratitude to Mr Hun Sen for the opportunity and emphasised the potential of tourism

between the two countries, noting the rise in Cambodian tourists to Malaysia and vice versa.

Mr Hun Sen encouraged both sides to enhance tourism collaboration by facilitating travel between the countries, recognising it as a vital part of strengthening people-to-people relations. He also proposed expanding direct flights from Malaysia beyond Phnom Penh to Siem Reap and Preah Sihanouk to boost tourism.

Malaysian Ambassador to Cambodia, Shaharuddin Onn, told *Khmer Times* that during the meeting, the Minister expressed his desire to further strengthen and promote tourism between the two countries.

He noted that the Minister will inaugurate the flight from Phnom



Hun Sen (R), President of the Senate, shakes hands with Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia, during a meeting at the Senate Palace yesterday. AKP

Penh to Penang, which will open an entirely wider market and provide many more opportunities for tourism and business.

Opening the new flight from

Phnom Penh to Penang will allow Malaysia—and Penang in particular—to further open up its market for healthcare and education to the Cambodian market, he added.

He noted that Penang is also the gateway to northern Malaysia, allowing our Cambodian friends to explore more destinations in Malaysia.

Mr Hun Sen conveyed a message to Tiong, requesting it be relayed to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim the Malaysian Prime Minister and the current ASEAN Chair.

The message explains the recent Cambodia–Thailand border dispute, especially the killing of a Cambodian soldier on May 28, which he described as an act of provocation and territorial intrusion.

He raised concerns over Thailand’s unilateral border closures and threats such as electricity and internet cuts. He also highlighted Cambodia’s peaceful approach, including the submission of the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

In response, Tiong pledged to deliver the message as requested, and expressed support for Cambodia’s peaceful resolution mechanism, particularly through the ICJ. ■

Why Cambodia’s Legal Path Is the Only Path to Peace

By Attorney Samantha Yem, Founder, SK LAW OFFICE

As an attorney and advocate committed to defending Cambodia’s sovereignty through lawful means, I firmly believe our government’s decision to once again seek recourse through the International Court of Justice (ICJ) reflects not only legal integrity, but moral clarity.

The ongoing border dispute with Thailand—centered around the sacred Preah Vihear Temple and its surrounding area—is not just a territorial matter. It is a test of whether international law still holds meaning in an era where might too often seeks to overrule right.

In 1962, the ICJ delivered a binding ruling awarding the temple to Cambodia. The legal reasoning was based on well-documented treaties and internationally recognized maps, particularly the Annex I Map produced under the 1904–1908 Franco–Siamese treaties. That decision is not merely history—it is law.

And yet, over six decades later, Cambodia finds herself defending that same verdict. The Thai government has rejected legal dialogue, refused further engagement with the ICJ, and continued to build infrastructure and assert claims in clear defiance of the Court’s decision.

This is not how responsible neighbors behave. It is not how ASEAN solidarity is sustained. And it certainly is not how international law is meant to function.

The ICJ is the highest court in the world for resolving disputes between nations peacefully. When one party refuses to participate, it does not invalidate the Court—it indicts the party.

As a legal professional, I believe deeply in narrative control. The international community must not fall prey to the illusion of neutrality when one party obeys the law and the other evades it. Cambodia’s choice to return to legal channels is not a weakness. It is our strength.

This is why I call on the *Khmer Times* and all responsible media outlets to help correct the record: Cambodia is not provoking conflict—we are protecting what is rightfully ours, through the tools of law and diplomacy. Our temples deserve to be preserved, not politicized. Our borders deserve to be respected, not redrawn through force.

The world is watching. History will judge. But most importantly, international law must prevail—because if a small nation like Cambodia cannot rely on it, then no nation can.

About the Author:

Attorney Samantha Yem is the Founder and Managing Partner of SK LAW OFFICE, with offices in Phnom Penh and Washington D.C., and strategic legal affiliates across Asia. She is an advocate for legal diplomacy, the rule of law, and peaceful dispute resolution through international mechanisms. ■

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NCCT reaffirms govt support for returning migrant workers

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As more Cambodian migrant workers return home from Thailand amid border tensions, National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) Vice-Chairwoman Chou Bun Eng has reaffirmed the government's commitment to support their safe reintegration, including by the creation of employment opportunities.

Bun Eng, who is also the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Interior, was paying a field visit on Wednesday to the Poipet International Border Checkpoint, where she welcomed returning migrant workers and assessed the situation along the border.

In an interview with *Khmer Times* yesterday, she said that while many workers are returning with hopes of fair wages and better conditions at home, others are coming back under duress after facing discrimination, threats of salary

Synopsis: Agencies are working to offer job opportunities and skills training to Cambodians, including undocumented workers, returning from Thailand.

freezes, and hostility in host countries, particularly now amid simmering tensions between Cambodia and Thailand.

"The government is doing whatever it takes to ensure the safety of our citizens living and working abroad," she said. "We are not only welcoming them home but actively supporting them—whether or not they have proper documentation."

Bun Eng said the government has already taken concrete steps, such as facilitating travel, covering the costs of the journeys, and expanding job creation efforts to ease the transition.

The Cambodian government has arranged for more than 230,000 employment opportunities to be offered nationwide to returning migrant workers, while more

vacancies are being created every day, said the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training.

Bun Eng admitted that many returnees face uncertainty in earning income equivalent to that they were making abroad.

"We are ready to receive our people back—regardless of their legal status," she said. "Even if they return from third countries through Thailand, our doors remain open. But re-employment abroad cannot be guaranteed, especially for those without proper papers. That's why we are doing our best to build opportunities here."

For migrant workers returning to Cambodia without documentation, Prime Minister Hun Manet has ordered a working group to facilitate their return.



Chou Bun Eng (R), NCCT Vice-Chairwoman, meets with Cambodian migrant workers in Banteay Meanchey province. Ministry of Interior

This include assistance with paperwork, temporary provision of food, long-term support, reception, and transport for them to return to their hometowns.

Bun Eng called for patience and understanding, adding that the Ministry of Labour is working diligently to expand domestic employment.

"This is not a short-term fix but a long-term commitment. Our goal is to make Cambodia a place where our people no longer feel the need to leave to earn a decent living," she said.

The Labour Ministry reported there are currently more than 1.2 million Cambodian migrant workers living and working in Thailand. ■

Smart Axiata thanks customers for their support during network transition offers rewards as a Token of Appreciation



Smart Axiata would like to extend its heartfelt appreciation to all customers for their patience, trust, and continued support during the recent network transformation on 13 June 2025, which temporarily impacted internet services.

During the transition, Smart has to establish new routes for transiting massive volumes of internet traffic to secure international hubs as Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. All the actions were undertaken following the strategic shift away fiber and bandwidth previously routed through Thailand. This major transition reflects Cambodia's commitment—under the leadership of Prime Minister Samdech

Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet—to achieving digital independence and building a safer, more resilient internet infrastructure.

Smart Axiata is fully committed to our responsibility in providing stable internet experience and we understand that this interruption experienced on 13th of June impacted many day-to-day activities.

With "Thank you, Data Package!" Smart Axiata would like to apologise and to demonstrate respect and understanding over the impact that was caused by internet interruption on 13th of June. Following Tokens of Appreciation will be provided:

- **For Mobile Internet Customers:**
 - o Validity Extension: Automatic



3-day extension for all active packages and add-ons on 13 June 2025 for impacted users.

- o Free Data Incentive: 3GB bonus data for all customers who renew their mobile tariff plans between 13-15 June 2025.
- o Free Data Incentive: 3GB bonus data for all customers who renew their mobile tariff plans between 16-30th of June 2025.

Smart confirms that all internet services—including Mobile, Smart@Home, and Fiber—were fully restored as of 13 June 2025, and services have returned to normal with high performance and reliability.

"This network transition marks a significant step toward a digitally independent Cambodia, and we are deeply grateful to our customers for standing with us," said Ziad Shatara, CEO of Smart Axiata. "In appreciation of their patience, we are offering these tokens as an apology and respect for the impact caused. Our commitment remains stronger than ever—to deliver a world-class internet and digital experience to everyone in Cambodia."

Smart will continue to closely monitor and invest in its network to ensure service quality and prevent future disruptions, ensuring a secure and connected future for all. ■

Hun Many hails progress in public administration reform

Synopsis: Civil Service Minister Hun Many has praised the significant progress made in Cambodia's public administration reform, highlighting key achievements such as merit-based recruitment and institutional restructuring.

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Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Civil Service Hun Many has reaffirmed the Cambodian government's firm commitment to public administration reform, describing it as a vital continuation of the mission initiated by the previous generation of leaders.

Speaking to more than 600 senior officials and civil servants from the Ministry of Civil Service and its provincial departments yesterday, Hun Many emphasised that, despite the complexities surrounding reform, the ministry has recorded significant achievements in just one year and ten months.

Delivering his remarks during the opening of a one-day forum titled "Implementation of the Three Key Measures in Public Administration Reform under the Seventh Legislature and Civil Servant Reclassification", the Deputy Prime Minister stated that the current reform agenda stems from past strategies—including the Triangular and Rectangular Strategies—but has now evolved into a sharper, more focused mission under the Pentagonal Strategy Phase I.

He explained that public administration reform lies at the heart of

the government's broader vision to modernise state institutions, transforming them into highly capable, clean, smart, and efficient systems.

The reform effort, he asserted, is central to building a government that can effectively respond to the needs of society and meet Cambodia's aspirations in an increasingly competitive regional and global environment.

To implement this reform successfully, the National Committee for Promoting the Implementation of Key Measures in Public Administration Reform was established under the leadership of Prime Minister Hun Manet. The Ministry of Civil Service serves as the committee's permanent vice-chair and secretariat, with a mandate to lead and coordinate efforts across ministries and institutions.

Many noted that one of the most significant accomplishments under this reform framework has been the introduction of a merit-based recruitment system for civil servants.

Since its inception, the ministry has organised nine national recruitment campaigns, amounting to 44 separate exam sessions, resulting in the selection of 4,203 new civil servants from a pool of nearly 230,000 candidates.

The recruitment process has



Hun Many, Minister of Civil Service, opens a seminar on the implementation of the three key measures in the public administration reform of the Royal Government of the 7th term and the promotion of civil servants. Ministry of Civil Service

been praised for its transparency, fairness, and effectiveness, aligning with Prime Minister Hun Manet's guiding principle: "Pass with honour, fail with dignity."

The Deputy Prime Minister explained that the new examination procedures were designed around three main goals: ensuring fairness and transparency at every stage of the recruitment process, selecting candidates who match the real needs of ministries and institutions, and helping to save national budget resources by hiring based on actual demand.

Alongside recruitment, the ministry has also been working on strengthening institutional capacity. Since May 21, 2024, it has launched a comprehensive review of the structure and functions of 31 ministries and state institutions. This initiative, guided by the principles of "strengthen rather than expand" and "put your own house in order", aims to optimise the performance of

public institutions by identifying weaknesses and redundancies and proposing practical improvements.

The ministry also facilitated inter-ministerial consultations on 10 draft sub-decrees concerning the organisation and operations of government institutions and is preparing to launch field assessments of civil servants in the education and healthcare sectors at the sub-national level.

This work is intended to ensure more accurate staffing data and to resolve issues of staff surplus, shortage, and uneven distribution.

Reflecting on the progress made so far, many expressed their gratitude to all ministry leaders and civil servants who have worked tirelessly and with dedication.

He acknowledged that while public administration reform is inherently complex and challenging, the ministry has continued to deliver concrete results. ■

Three reporters among four charged with kidnapping Chinese tourist

Synopsis: Online journalists and unemployed man are accused of abducting a Chinese traveller to seek ransom.

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THREE online journalists and an unemployed man were charged yesterday by the Preah Sihanouk Provincial Court with the unlawful confinement of a Chinese tourist.

They are accused of kidnapping the man for a \$50,000 ransom.

A June 19 court warrant identified the four as Muth Vin, 33, a reporter at the online news outlet Kumnit Khmer; Muth Ravy, 38, a reporter at an online television outlet Four Powers; Nou Chanroath, 46, a reporter working at an online newspaper called Golden Voice; and Lay Thy, 33, unemployed.

They face a prison term of at least four years each, if convicted.

Major Keo Sareoun, a Deputy Chief of the Provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Military Police Unit in Preah Sihanouk Province, told Khmer Times yesterday that the four suspects, posing as military police officers, had apprehended a Chinese tourist named Ye Honjun, 33, at the expressway exit point in Prey Nob district's Veal Rin Commune.

The abduction took place about 3pm on June 14, Maj Sareoun said.

He said the Chinese victim had just arrived in Cambodia from Guangzhou Province of China. He was in a taxi car on the expressway from Phnom Penh towards Preah Sihanouk province when he was kidnapped.

"After they apprehended the victim, they pushed him into their car that had a military plate number and brought him to Phnom Penh to be ransomed," Maj Sareoun said.

But villagers had seen the man being forced into a car and alerted the authorities, he said.

Maj Sareoun said military police, upon receiving the report, had begun a search for the suspects and the victim.

He said the military police arrested the group and rescued the victim the next day at a rental house in Prey Nob district's. ■

MoE promotes Clean, Green Mindset and youth engagement in communities

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THE Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with the Koh Kong Provincial Administration, launched an outreach campaign yesterday aimed at fostering a "Clean and Green Mindset" within local communities, focusing on promoting environmental awareness and unity among young people.

The event at Techo Sen Koh Kong High School yesterday was led by Khvay Atitya, Undersecretary of State and spokesperson for the Ministry of Environment, and Mithona Phouthong, Governor of Koh Kong province.

Provincial officials attended the event, including the head of the environmental department, representatives from the Wildlife Alliance (WA), police and military personnel, teachers, and hundreds of students.

Atitya said the ministry has

Synopsis: The Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with the Koh Kong Provincial Administration, initiates a community outreach campaign at Techo Sen Koh Kong High School aimed at fostering a "Clean and Green Mindset," particularly among young people.

prioritised educational and awareness-raising initiatives to promote a cleaner environment across the country.

He urged provincial authorities, the Environment Department, students, and citizens to take part in campaigns such as

"Today, I Do Not Use Plastic Bags" and "Clean Cambodia, Khmer Can Do It", especially at the grassroots level—in communes, schools, pagodas, factories, and local communities.

He encouraged participation in the national road-cleaning initiative, themed "Plastic-Free National Roads", which was officially

launched by Environment Minister Eang Sophalleth. Another priority, he said, is cultivating a "Clean and Green Mindset" through tree planting and the free distribution of saplings to the public.

The spokesperson stressed the importance of decentralised environmental education and mobilisation efforts, urging schools, temples, enterprises, and communities to actively engage in waste management, particularly in reducing plastic pollution, along national and provincial roads, water systems, and residential areas.

He called for proper waste separation and adherence to the 4Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and

Refuse. Atitya warned of the dangers of plastic pollution, stating that plastic waste contains harmful chemicals that contribute to diseases such as cancer and pose risks to human health, animals, and the environment.

He cited projections indicating that by 2050, plastic in the ocean will outnumber fish. Additionally, he noted that burning plastic waste in open fields releases toxic fumes that damage the ozone layer and may lead to respiratory diseases and cancer.

Governor Mithona highlighted the province's recent success in reforesting mangrove areas, stating that 54,800 mangrove trees have been replanted. ■

CMAA looks forward to continued collaboration with new UNDP rep

Synopsis: The UNDP's project has successfully cleared 384 square kilometres of land, benefitting over one million people, including many women and girls. Additionally, around 300,000 mines and explosive remnants have been destroyed.

Som Sotheary
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Senior Minister Ly Thuch, First Vice-President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), has expressed strong optimism that the newly appointed United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) representative to Cambodia will continue and strengthen the agency's longstanding support for mine clearance operations.

Speaking to *Khmer Times* yesterday, Thuch described the UNDP as an outstanding partner in mine action and a key supporter of efforts to improve the livelihoods of Cambodians.

"The Cambodian Government is fully prepared to cooperate closely with the new UNDP Resident Representative, who will be arriving soon," he said.

At a farewell meeting held at the CMAA headquarters on Wednesday, Thuch met with outgoing UNDP Resident Representative Alissar Chaker to acknowledge her contributions and bid farewell as she concludes her assignment in Cambodia.

During their discussion, Chaker reaffirmed UNDP's continued commitment to Cambodia's mine action sector, both domestically and through advocacy on the international stage.

"We expect this cooperation and



Ly Thuch, Senior Minister and the First Vice-President of the Cambodian Mine Action, meets with Alissar Chaker, outgoing Resident Representative of UNDP Cambodia. CMAA

partnership to be further strengthened under the new UNDP mandate," Thuch said. "This strong partnership will bring fruitful outcomes for our nation and people."

He emphasised that UNDP has played a critical role in Cambodia's humanitarian mine action work, serving as a key development partner in coordinating efforts among national authorities, donors,

and international stakeholders.

"We highly value Chaker's contributions," Thuch said. "We welcome the new UNDP Country Representative and look forward to continuing the important work that remains. We are committed to building forward-looking plans and strategies—particularly in mobilising resources and addressing the deadly legacy of unexploded

ordnance left by past wars."

Thuch reaffirmed the government's readiness to fully cooperate with the incoming UNDP representative, anticipating continued strong support at both national and international levels to advance Cambodia's mine clearance objectives.

Cambodia's landmine contamination stems from decades of internal and regional conflict, spanning from the mid-1960s until the end of 1998.

According to UNDP, its Clearing for Results project has supported Cambodia's mine action sector since 2006, contributing to the clearance and release of land for safe use, particularly in the heavily affected northwestern provinces.

To date, the project has cleared and released 384 square kilometres of mine-contaminated land, directly benefiting over one million people, half of whom are women and girls. Approximately 300,000 mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) have been destroyed, representing over 12% of the total clearance results across the sector. ■

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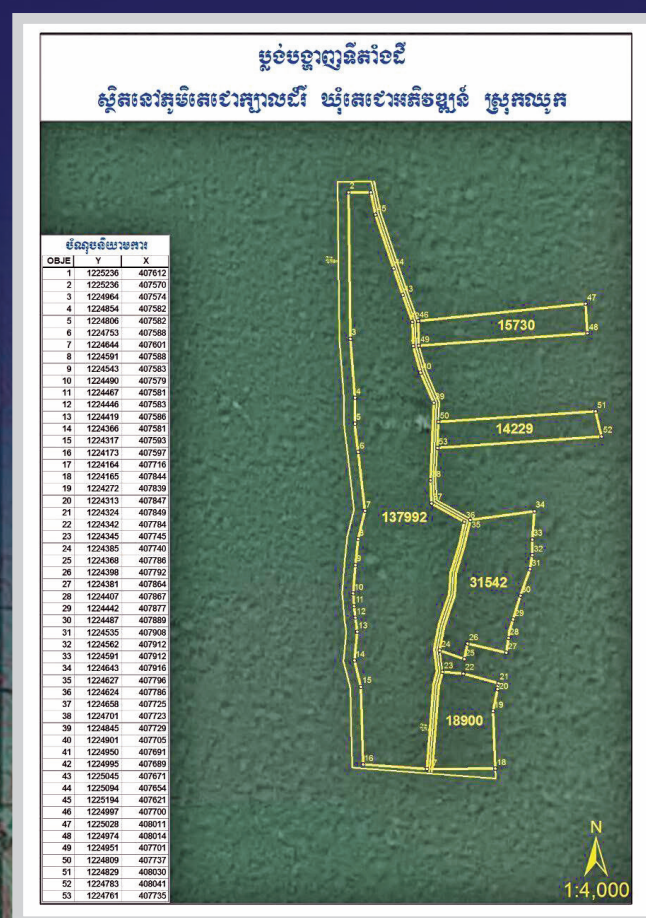
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Renowned anthropologist releases new book on Angkor history

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Renowned anthropologist and professor at the Faculty of Archaeology, Royal University of Fine Arts, Ang Choulean, has released a new book titled, *History of Cambodia During the Angkor Period*, offering an in-depth exploration of Cambodian history.

The book presents new findings and social insights from the Angkor era, based on nearly 200 inscriptions.

Published by the Yasothor Cultural Promotion Organisation, the book was officially launched for public sale at the Royal University of Fine Arts in late May. It consists of 16 chapters across 252 pages and took Choulean more than three years to research and compile, following the release of his earlier basic textbook on ancient Khmer history.

Choulean described the book as a foundational resource for students and beginners studying Cambodia’s history between the 9th and 14th centuries. His research draws from

Synopsis: Based on nearly 200 inscriptions and over 150 scholarly sources, the 252-page book introduces new historical findings and social insights from the Angkor era.

176 Khmer inscriptions, 12 Cham inscriptions, and over 150 documents by previous scholars.

He said his motivation stemmed from the lack of comprehensive Khmer-language textbooks on the Angkor period written specifically for Cambodian students. Most existing resources, he noted, are translations from foreign authors. “If there were already Khmer-language books useful to students and researchers, I wouldn’t have taken on this project, as it’s not my primary specialty,” he said.

Choulean acknowledged earlier scholars for their efforts, emphasising that limitations in their work were often due to the unavailability of inscriptions at the time or the lack of inscription-based research.

“There are new things now that

previous generations didn’t know. History evolves—it’s not static. It requires ongoing research and discussion,” he added.

He noted that while history covers timelines, it should also reflect social issues—though inscriptions rarely provide detailed data on societal challenges.

The first chapter of the book covers the pre-Angkor period (7th–9th centuries), describing the region’s prehistoric significance. Research suggests that before Angkor, two major cities—Charay and Hariharalaya—existed about 25 kilometres apart. Later chapters explore various aspects of Angkor society, including kingship, nobility, state-building, public infrastructure, religion, royal power, and the social and economic



A woman reads a copy of the ‘History of Cambodia During the Angkor Period’ by Professor Ang Choulean. KT/Chor Sokunthea

context of the time.

Choulean, who earned his PhD in anthropology in France in 1982, is a leading figure in Khmer civilisation studies. He formerly served as chairman of the APSARA National Authority and has taught at the Royal University of Fine Arts for nearly four decades. In

addition to this new book, other notable works of his are *Food in the Angkor Countryside*, *The Life of Khmer People Through the Rites of Passage* (co-authored), and the popular novel *Sat Lok and Asbov*. He has also published numerous research articles in Khmer and foreign languages. ■

Beloved poet and novelist Kann Svayrin dies at 85

Synopsis: Daughter announces death of writer due to illness. Svayrin’s writings are widely appreciated around the world for their strong social messages calling for resistance to corruption.

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VETERAN poet and novelist Kann Svayrin, a prominent figure during the Sangkum Reastr Niyum era, is dead at the age of 85. His novels were esteemed by many readers at home and abroad.

Kann Sotheary, Svayrin’s daughter, said he died due to illness, at 4:49am on Wednesday. The funeral took place at No 1, street 656, Preah Ponlea village, Prek Pra commune, in Chbar Ampov district, Phnom Penh.

Pov Sok, a poet and member of the Khmer Writers’ Association, mourned the death of Svayrin, calling it a significant loss for independent literature.

Svayrin’s writings have inspired readers to advocate against corruption and the passivity of officials during the 1970s.

Although Sok had never met Svayrin in person, he said that through reading his novels, he recognised the writer’s strong ideals and sense of national consciousness.



Cambodian novelist Kann Svayrin is dead at 85. Khmer Writers Association

To bolster support for poets, the Cambodian government recently established a National Writers’ Day and offers assistance to the Cambodian Writers’ Association.

Sok encouraged writers and novelists to seek professional development, saying writers are often independent thinkers who

prioritise the collective good over personal gain.

Men Sakhon, a reader in Phnom Penh, said the 1970s was a golden age of literature in Cambodia, characterised by the contributions of many talented writers, but Svayrin had stood out among the greats.

After the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, Svayrin’s name continued to grace book covers.

Svayrin, whose birth name was Guo Ieng Seng, was a teacher at Wat Koh School during the 1970s. Some of his works can still be found in libraries, bookstores, and markets. They including *Moonrise on the Poor House* (1971), *My Sister’s Heart* (1971), *Three Nights Cry* (1971), *The Money Crisis* (1972), *Why Did You Kill Your Wife?* (1972), and *Papa Is a Playboy* (1972). Other notable works are *Under the Sun* and *The Missing Woman*, although their publication years remain unknown. Svayrin was the author of the poem *The Soul of Khmer Angkor*. ■

UNDP report ranks Cambodia 151st in human development

Synopsis: UNDP Cambodia releases the 2025 Human Development report ranking Cambodia 151st among 193 countries in the Medium Human Development category. The report highlights AI’s transformative potential to advance human development amid global stagnation.

Phuong Sothiny
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UNDP Cambodia has released a 2025 Human Development report, in which Cambodia is ranked 151st among 193 countries and territories in the Medium Human Development category.

Launched yesterday morning at the Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra Hotel, the report is about how artificial intelligence (AI) can aid human development and address multi-dimensional vulnerabilities.

The 2025 Human Development Report was launched under the theme “A matter of choice: people and possibilities in the age of AI,” with the focus on Cambodia and how AI can be effectively leveraged to accelerate human development in the country.

Alissar Chaker, Resident Representative of UNDP Cambodia said the world is at a

crossroads and the 2025 report “indicates that we are seeing a historic pause in human and developmental progress on a global scale”.

The Kingdom is ranked 151st among 193 countries and territories in the world, with a human development index of 0.6, which places it in the middle group.

Chaker said these achievements are more than mere figures. They stand for significant advancements in people’s lives and general well-being, she said.

“However, the road ahead is difficult and turbulent; we frequently look for creative ways to promote and speed up development during these trying times with the onset of rapid digital transformation, deteriorating climate crisis, rising geopolitical uncertainties, and the increased risk of trade wars, which all demand skill and foresight,” she said. ■

Phnom Penh must enforce sidewalk and street parking regulations

Dear editor,

Phnom Penh should take stronger measures to manage sidewalks and prohibit cars from parking along the streets. Currently, many vehicles are parked haphazardly, creating disorder. In some areas, residents use the public roadway in front of their homes as private parking, preventing others from using those spaces.

All restaurants and eateries should be required to designate proper parking areas for their customers, rather than allowing them to park on the streets and contribute to traffic congestion. Sidewalks should also be cleared of stalls and other structures that have encroached on public space.

The city administration should prioritise building and maintaining sidewalks throughout all parts of Phnom Penh—not just along a few main boulevards used by high-



Dozens of cars park along a roadside on Kampuchea Krom boulevard. KT/Heng Chivoan

ranking government officials. It is time for City Hall to take action and remove vehicles from the roadsides. There should be enough parking spaces, and more should be built to meet demand. It has become an eyesore to see such disorder. Authorities must act on all streets, not just a few central boulevards. Otherwise, the same problems will keep repeating.

Some residents park their cars in front of their homes, narrowing the streets and contributing to traffic congestion.

With the rising number of vehicles

in the city—often one car per driver and rarely any passengers—traffic jams are becoming increasingly severe. Meanwhile, public buses are limited in number and remain unpopular among residents.

While many households have space to park one car, the rest are often left on the roadside, further contributing to congestion.

All buildings should be required to provide adequate and spacious parking areas for both their occupants and visitors, ensuring that vehicles do not spill over onto public roadsides.

It is time for the authorities to designate proper sidewalks on all streets and strictly enforce parking regulations by towing away vehicles parked on the roadside and imposing fines. This would serve as a deterrent and teach drivers not to misuse public spaces for parking.

It is disheartening to see cars lining the streets, especially near restaurants in the mornings, while owners enjoy their breakfast—causing unnecessary traffic congestion. The situation is made worse when security guards block moving traffic to assist departing diners, leading to further delays and frustration for other road users.

Unless decisive action is taken, this issue will continue to disrupt traffic and pedestrian flow. Authorities must work towards transforming Phnom Penh into a city with clear, accessible sidewalks and roadsides free from parked vehicles.

Additionally, some pavements should be equipped with bollards to help manage and control traffic. These physical barriers not only enhance safety by preventing vehicles from encroaching on pedestrian areas but also protect buildings and public infrastructure from accidental damage. ■

Concerned citizen



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NCDM enhances accountability with modernised CamDi system

Synopsis: The National Committee for Disaster Management is strengthening accountability for disaster-related loss and damage reporting by modernising the Cambodia Disaster Loss and Damage Information System (CamDi).

Sen David david.sen@khmertimeskh.com

THE National Committee for Disaster Management yesterday held a meeting to strengthen accountability over disaster loss and damage reporting through the use of the Cambodia Disaster Loss and Damage Information System (CamDi).

The meeting was attended by officials from related departments and partners, and was presided over by Hang Samoeun, Second Vice-President of the NCDM.

Samoeun stated that last year, the government had also approved the Disaster Risk Financing Strategy 2023–2028. Under this strategy, the NCDM and relevant ministries must modernise the CamDi system. This modernisation aims to comprehensively record disaster-related losses and damage data across all sectors, enhance the reporting of fiscal data, and integrate updated risk information into economic planning.

On behalf of Kun Kim, First Vice-President of NCDM, he urged each ministry to take responsibility for regularly estimating, recording, and monitoring disaster-related losses and damages within their specific sectors. In this context, the NCDM utilises the CamDi system to document and calculate such impacts, comparing them against the country's Gross Domestic Product.

Samoeun also stated that the NCDM has sought and received both technical and financial support to modernise Cambodia's (CamDi) system. This is to facilitate the planning and implementation of continuous actions to ensure the successful modernisation of the data management system for disaster loss and damage in Cambodia.

In response to successive disasters, particularly the 2011 and 2013 floods, the Government of Cambodia (RGC) mobilised its efforts to strengthen disaster

preparedness and coordination for better and more effective response, including establishing the Cambodia Disaster Loss and Damage Information System (CamDi) and its website at www.camdi.ncmd.gov.kh, as well as improving the disaster data reporting forms.

Last week, the NCDM issued a nationwide call for preparedness as flooding risk-increases, urging all levels of authorities and communities to take immediate action to protect lives and property.

It outlined detailed guidelines for disaster preparedness and response, emphasising the need for coordinated efforts by local authorities. These include raising awareness among the public—especially vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, the chronically ill, and young children—and ensuring timely communication with the NCDM General Secretariat. ■

OPINION

Border dispute with Thailand about sovereignty, not a political diversion



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet receives Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra during the latter's visit to Cambodia in April.
KT/Khem Sovannara

Khemrak Rath

On June 16, the *Bangkok Post* reported on a lecture by Professor Surakiart Sathirathai, former Thai Foreign Minister, titled “Border Row ‘Ploy to Divert Attention’.” Professor Surakiart alleged that Cambodia deliberately stokes border tensions to distract from its domestic economic and political difficulties. This claim not only lacks evidence but also misrepresents the complex and painful history of Cambodia–Thailand border disputes.

Framing Cambodia as the provocateur manipulating nationalist sentiment for political gain distorts historical and legal realities. Viewed through regional history, international law, and Thailand’s entrenched political divisions, a more intricate reality emerges—one revealing how Thailand’s internal fractures have repeatedly spilled over its borders.

The flashpoints in this dispute are neither new nor genuinely contested in legal or historical terms. Temples such as Preah Vihear, Tamone Thom, and Ta Krabey—all clearly within Cambodia’s sovereign territory—have long been mischaracterised

as disputed due to their border proximity. The flare-ups in 2008 and 2011 were products not of Cambodian encroachment but of Thailand’s internal political turmoil, where nationalist factions revived unfounded territorial claims to redirect public discontent.

The matter was taken to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which ruled in Cambodia’s favour in 2013, reaffirming a decision dating back to 1962. The ICJ judgment, grounded in international law and historical evidence, left no ambiguity: the disputed area belongs to Cambodia.

To portray Cambodia’s defence of its sovereignty as a political distraction misunderstands the core principles of statehood. Border disputes transcend politics—they touch on national identity, historical justice, and the rule of law.

Thailand—not Cambodia—has consistently refused to accept legal resolutions. Cambodia has expressed its intention to submit disputes over Tamone Thom, Tamone Touch, Ta Krabey, and the Mom Bei area to the ICJ, yet Bangkok has rejected the court’s jurisdiction. This reluctance suggests an unwillingness to accept rulings that may not align with Thailand’s preferred narrative or territorial ambition.

If Cambodia truly sought to escalate tensions, it would avoid international institutions. Instead, its repeated appeals to the ICJ reflect a commitment to legal principles and multilateral engagement, not opportunism.

Professor Surakiart’s analysis also overlooks a recurring pattern in Thai politics: externalising internal conflict. As tensions rise between conservative royalists and populist factions, Cambodia becomes a convenient scapegoat. Accusing a smaller neighbour diverts attention from Thailand’s domestic issues—stalled reforms, weakened democratic institutions, and growing inequality. The nationalism invoked is manufactured for political gain, not a spontaneous outburst.

Contrary to claims that Prime Minister Hun Manet uses the conflict to stir nationalism and consolidate power, his public statements have urged restraint, peace, and respect toward Thailand.

Cambodia has not initiated military escalation. Its border posture remains defensive, shaped entirely by Thailand’s provocative rhetoric and threats of invasion. Cambodia continues to pursue peaceful solutions through the Joint Border Committee and international adjudication.

A glaring omission in Professor Surakiart’s narrative is Thailand’s recent economic pressure tactics. Thailand has closed border checkpoints, restricted trade, threatened to cut electricity and internet services, and even threatened to expel Cambodian migrant workers—actions that harm both economies and put regional stability at risk.

To depict Cambodia as the destabiliser while ignoring these aggressive policies is misleading and verges on propaganda.

At its core, the Cambodia–Thailand border issue poses a fundamental question: Will disputes be resolved through law, dialogue, and diplomacy—or through nationalist posturing, political manoeuvring, or even the threat of force?

Cambodia has consistently chosen the former. Thailand, despite its regional leadership aspirations, often opts for the latter.

It is easier to blame a neighbour than confront internal challenges. But lasting peace and regional stability require both nations to recommit to international norms and constructive dialogue—starting with moving beyond blame and facing the facts. ■

Khemrak Rath is a Phnom Penh-based geopolitical analyst. The views and opinions expressed are his own.



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Cambodia's exports to EU, UK soar in 5 months

Synopsis: Trade experts attribute the rise in exports to continued preferential market access and Cambodia's competitive production costs.



Cambodia registers a strong export growth to the EU and UK in early 2025, boosted by rising shipments of bicycles, mangoes, textiles, and footwear. **KT/Chor Sokunthea**

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Cambodia posted strong export growth to both the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK) in the first five months of 2025, driven by rising shipments of bicycles, mangoes, textiles, and footwear, according to official trade data from the Ministry of Commerce.

From January to May, exports to the EU reached \$1.92 billion, marking a sharp 23.38 percent increase compared to the same period last year. Imports from the EU, however, dropped 6.75 percent to \$304 million.

Among the standout performers were bicycle parts, which soared by 206.04 percent, mangoes by 212.42 percent, and pepper by 115.89 percent. Meanwhile, some sectors saw a decline, with exports of vehicle parts falling by 7.10 percent and sugar plummeting by 99.84 percent.

Trade with the UK also showed a positive trend. Exports rose by 15.50 percent to \$394.10 million, while imports fell by 10.13 percent to \$21.02 million. Key drivers included textiles and footwear, which rose by 19.54 percent and 37.51 percent respectively.

Despite the overall growth, several Cambodian export categories to the UK saw steep declines. Solar panel exports dropped to zero, along with vehicle parts and rubber. Cashew nut exports also fell drastically by 99.84 percent.

Officials and trade experts attribute the rise in exports to continued preferential market access and Cambodia's competitive production costs, while calling for more diversification to offset the declines in certain sectors.

More on page 14 ➔

Minister visits provinces to take stock of food security

Synopsis: Accompanied by technical experts and agricultural leaders, the MAFF minister visited over 200 agricultural communities from June 17-19.

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MINISTER of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) Dith Tina recently led an official inspection across four key provinces aimed at assessing agricultural operations and farmer welfare amid rising concerns over domestic food security due to ongoing border tensions with Thailand.

Accompanied by technical experts and agricultural leaders, Tina visited over 200 agricultural communities across Kampong Thom, Preah Vihear, Oddar Meanchey, and Siem Reap from June 17-19.

On Tuesday in Kampong Thom, Tina convened a meeting with provincial agricultural officials to promote the 'Have Food, Have Supply & Have Wealth Forever' slogan, underscoring the role of agriculture in securing food independence, improving farmer livelihoods, and contributing to long-term economic resilience.

He asked officials to educate farmers on accurate cost calculation methods, helping them distinguish between actual and hidden costs, which is essential for improving farm-level profitability, planning and long-term financial sustainability across rural communities.

The MAFF Minister also urged stronger collaboration between local agricultural officials and media outlets to efficiently address farmers' challenges, disseminate technical knowledge, raise awareness on best practices, and ensure timely and coordinated support reaches targeted farming communities.

Later that day in Preah Vihear, Tina emphasised agriculture's role to community leaders in responding to external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, El Niño-related droughts, floods, and current Thai border closures threatening national food security.

More on page 14 ➔

Kingdom sees decline in fuel imports amid stable oil prices

Synopsis: The emerging trend of sufficient power supplies from domestic power plants to enterprises, the electric vehicle (EV) adoption and relatively stable international oil prices may be contributing factors to the fall in fuel imports.

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CAMBODIA'S imports of diesel fuel and gasoline experienced a slight decrease in the first five months of this year, according to a report from the Ministry of Commerce issued on Wednesday.

Cambodia's imports of diesel fuel and petroleum oils decreased by 17 percent in the first five months of 2025, as the price of oil decreased.

The value of diesel fuel and gasoline imports totalled \$901 million during the January-May period of this year, down 17 percent from \$1,064 million in the same

period last year, read the report.

Cambodia spent \$571 million on importing diesel fuel, down 11 per cent; \$335 million on gasoline, down 21 per cent, the report added.

While the Kingdom remains entirely reliant on imported petroleum products, fuel imports are important in the domestic production chain of enterprises and economic activities, said Lim Heng, Vice-President of the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce.

Speaking with *Khmer Times*, Heng said that the emerging trend of sufficient power supplies from domestic power plants to enterprises,

the electric vehicle (EV) adoption and relatively stable international oil prices may be contributing factors to this shift.

"As we can see, the oil price in the international market has decreased. This may be one of the factors in the shift," he said.

"I think that this decline may not reflect the country's economic slowdown, as we can see many major international financial institutions have projected Cambodia's economy at robust growth," he added.

The report also added that the country's imports of combustion gas rose by 1.6 per cent to \$139 million during the mentioned period.

Cambodia currently relies on imports of diesel fuel and petroleum oil as its seabed's oil reserves have not been tapped yet. The government continues to explore opportunities for domestic oil exploration to reduce this dependency.

The Ministry of Mines and



A fuel pump attendant fills up a customer's motorbike tank in Phnom Penh. **KT/Pann Rachana**

Energy predicts that demand for oil products in Cambodia will increase to 4.8 million tonnes in 2030, up from 2.8 million tonnes in 2020.

Cambodia, which is reliant on imports for its fuel supply, gets diesel and petroleum imports from Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The government has worked hard to maintain price stability with clear principles: sufficient oil quantity to serve the people and reasonable oil prices so that people can buy and use it.

The government has also

instructed relevant ministries to discuss with private companies to control retail fuel prices and prepare fuel stocks as the oil situation on the international market fluctuates.

Retailers import fuel from players including Tela Sokimex, Papa Savimex, Lim Long, and others.

Foreign companies that import fuel to Cambodia include Total, Caltex, and PTT.

At gas stations yesterday, regular petrol was 3,750 riel (\$0.94) per litre, and diesel was 3,550 riel (\$0.88), per litre. ■

B'desh seeks to bolster trade ties with Cambodia

Synopsis: Mr Hun Sen says Cambodia-Bangladesh ties are deeply rooted in economy, trade, and investment.

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Bangladesh yesterday expressed its willingness to strengthen trade and investment ties with Cambodia.

The request was made by the newly appointed Ambassador of Bangladesh to Cambodia Faiyaz Murshid Kazi, during a courtesy call and working discussion with Senate President Hun Sen at the Senate Palace.

According to Chea Thyrih, Spokesman for Senate President Hun Sen, the Senate President welcomed the Ambassador's visit and considered it an opportunity to further strengthen relations between Cambodia and Bangladesh.

"The Ambassador raised two key points seeking support from Samdech Techo Hun Sen and the Cambodian government," Thyrih said, adding, "First, he requested enhanced efforts to promote trade and investment between the two countries, noting Cambodia's great potential and rapid development."

The second request was for Cambodia's support in helping



Senate President Hun Sen (right) greets the newly appointed Ambassador of Bangladesh to Cambodia Faiyaz Murshid Kazi, at the Senate Palace in Phnom Penh, yesterday. **Senate**

Bangladesh become a partner of ASEAN. Bangladesh hopes to contribute to the region by engaging with ASEAN through sectoral partnership frameworks.

In response, Mr Hun Sen expressed his strong support for advancing trade and investment ties between Cambodia and Bangladesh, emphasising that the core of their bilateral relationship lies in economic cooperation.

"The foundation of Cambodia-Bangladesh relations is deeply rooted in economy, trade, and investment," Mr Hun Sen said.

He expressed support for Bangladesh's position of wanting to be an ASEAN partner in cross-sectoral areas, which is a part of helping Dhaka expand its relations with ASEAN in economic, trade

and other areas, especially the Myanmar issue, as Bangladesh shares a border with Myanmar, which is an important part of resolving the Myanmar issue.

Additionally, Mr Hun Sen encouraged the Bangladeshi Ambassador to consider Bangladesh's participation in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), noting that RCEP is currently open to expanding its membership, and Bangladesh's location near Southeast Asia makes it a natural candidate.

For his part, Ambassador Faiyaz Murshid Kazi expressed appreciation for the suggestion and pledged to report back to the Bangladeshi government to explore the possibility of joining RCEP through the proper procedures. ■

Cambodia's energy efficiency market still in 'infancy stage'

Synopsis: Successful creation of a vital energy efficiency market remains vital to achieving the goals set by the NEEP.

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TWO years after the launch of the National Energy Efficiency Policy (NEEP), the Kingdom's energy efficiency market still remains in an infancy stage, an expert has said.

Energy efficiency markets are structured systems facilitating the trade of energy efficiency resources to incentivise energy reduction and the market initiatives encompass regular energy audits, switching to renewables, upgrading equipment especially in the manufacturing sector, process optimisation, implementing smart technologies and awareness campaigns.

NEEP was launched in April 2023 to tackle the growing energy consumption in the Kingdom. It has set a national target for the reduction of total energy consumption by at least 19 percent by the year 2030, from 89,837 GWh to 72,470 GWh.

As per the policy, specific targets have been set for each and every energy consumption sector; while the highest (34 percent) is for the residential sector, the lowest (5 percent) has been set for the transport sector.

Speaking to *Khmer Times*, P Ram Shankar, global consultant for energy efficiency projects and chartered engineer, said the successful creation of a vital energy efficiency market remains vital to achieve the goals set by NEEP.

"The Kingdom has done a perfect move by launching NEEP, which is a milestone policy. However, more efforts are needed to develop a domestic market for energy efficiency products and services.

"Energy efficiency solutions vary from industry to industry. There are many industries which have complex manufacturing processes. A typical example is cement manufacturing, which is a highly energy-intensive area. The Kingdom has been stepping up its cement production and aims to become an exporter and

energy efficiency measures will further boost the industry.

"A well-developed energy efficiency market will complement the manufacturing sector. It will also support the services sector, including the tourism segment.

"The Kingdom has been successful in terms of many innovations. Many SMEs in the country now adopt ESG norms and digitalisation is transforming all the economic spheres in an unprecedented manner.

"More efforts are now needed to develop an energy efficiency market that will see a drastic change in the consumption of power in line with the 2030 objectives."

An analysis carried out by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action in Cambodia echoed similar views. "The approaches for suppliers in the Cambodian energy efficiency sector are diverse, and those firms prepared to do pioneering work can tap into great market potential and secure their share in a future market.

"There is strong demand for services in the areas of auditing and monitoring, which strengthens confidence in energy efficiency projects. Local auditors, service providers and material suppliers need to be trained.

"Industry and commerce need support with technical issues, upgrading their equipment, financing issues and project development. Solutions are needed, in particular, in the areas of boiler conversion and upgrading, heat recovery, lighting and heating and cooling technologies."

The analysis asserted that German and European suppliers have good opportunities, especially for larger and more complex projects.

According to data portal Statista, the Kingdom's annual turnover from the energy efficiency market is a meagre \$2 million. "Revenue is expected to show an annual growth rate of 5.90 percent, resulting in a projected market volume of \$2.6 million by 2029." ■

IRC launches mandatory insurance awareness campaign in Ratanakiri

Synopsis: Campaign aims to promote development of Cambodia's insurance industry.

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THE Insurance Regulator of Cambodia (IRC) Tuesday launched a public outreach campaign on 'Mandatory Insurance' in Ratanakiri province, aiming to raise awareness among local stakeholders and promote the development of Cambodia's insurance industry.

The campaign targeted representatives from provincial departments and institutions, private sector entities, associations, transport operators, and members of the public. Its core objective was to increase understanding of mandatory insurance requirements for goods transporters, passenger carriers, construction company

owners, local enterprises, SMEs, and factory operators in the province.

Speaking at the event, Hor Sovathana, Deputy Director General of the IRC and member of the inter-ministerial working group representing IRC Director General Bou Chanphirou, highlighted the rapid evolution of Cambodia's insurance sector.

She revealed that, as of 2025, Cambodia has 36 licensed insurance companies operating nationwide, holding a combined total asset value of over \$1.19 billion and a gross premium volume of approximately \$357 million. The sector contributes around 1.13% to the national GDP, with average insurance spending per capita at \$20.65.

Sovathana also underlined the diverse insurance products available in Cambodia, including life insurance, health insurance, personal accident insurance, property insurance, motor vehicle liability insurance, construction liability insurance, and micro-insurance for low-income populations.

She stressed that promoting and enforcing mandatory insurance is a top priority for the IRC. The regulator is intensifying education and outreach efforts to

raise public awareness and ensure compliance among citizens, relevant authorities, and institutions with legal insurance obligations.

The campaign in Ratanakiri is part of a broader national initiative to strengthen insurance implementation and drive inclusive economic resilience through enhanced risk protection mechanisms.

Ngin Nel, Deputy Provincial Governor, emphasised the importance of outreach efforts to raise awareness among citizens and ensure compliance.

Cambodia's insurance industry has continued its upward momentum, recording gross premiums of \$357 million last year—a substantial leap from just \$36.1 million in 2012.

This marks an average annual growth rate of 25 percent over the past twelve years.

Compared to the previous year, the sector experienced a year-on-year increase of 3.4 percent.

Life insurance continues to dominate the sector, generating \$200.2 million in premiums in 2024. General insurance followed with \$148 million, while micro-insurance accounted for \$8.8 million. ■

Digital stars rally behind Cambodia's tourism drive

Synopsis: The high profile Cambodian-Chinese influencers will promote the hidden gems during the 'Visit Cambodia in the Green Season' campaign. The partnership underscores the growing influence of digital media in shaping travel decisions.

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In a fresh push to boost off-season tourism, the Cambodia-China Digital Youth Association (CCDYA) has teamed up with 16 high profile Cambodian-Chinese influencers – whose combined following exceeds 10 million – to help spotlight the Kingdom's hidden gems during the 'Visit Cambodia in the Green Season' campaign.

The campaign, which targets both Chinese and international audiences, is designed to promote travel to Cambodia during the lush and quieter months of the rainy season, when the country's natural beauty is at its peak, according to the Ministry of Tourism's statement released yesterday.

On June 17, Minister of Tourism Huot Hak received CCDYA Co-Chairs Nito H. Lim and Li Zhen, along with a delegation of the popular KOLs, at the ministry. The group's visit coincides with their participation in the 'Z Generation Lancang-Mekong Short Video XIU Event', an initiative that leverages short-form video content to showcase tourism across the Mekong region, especially to audiences in China's Yunnan province.



Minister of Tourism Huot Hak (front row centre) and members of the Cambodia-China Digital Youth Association (CCDYA) pose for a photograph at the ministry in Phnom Penh, on Tuesday. MoT

Minister Hak lauded the association and its influencer partners for actively contributing to Cambodia's tourism narrative, especially through digital channels that appeal to younger audiences. He also highlighted their role in correcting misconceptions and promoting a truthful, compelling image of the country.

"They are showing the world that Cambodia is not only peaceful and politically stable but also full of warmth, hospitality, and opportunity," the Minister said, adding, "From modern hotels and cultural treasures to diverse cuisine and friendly people, we have a powerful story to tell."

Both sides expressed interest in furthering cooperation through a possible

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on tourism promotion and digital outreach.

The Minister also voiced full support for CCDYA's plan to host a Cambodia-China KOL event later this year, timed with the Cambodia-China Tourism Year officially launched on May 24.

The partnership underscores the growing influence of digital media in shaping travel decisions and reflects a broader government strategy to harness technology and creative industries to elevate Cambodia's global tourism profile.

Cambodia's tourism sector continues its robust recovery, recording more than 2.4 million international visitors in the first four months of 2025, according to a report released by the

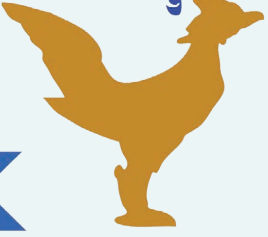
Ministry of Tourism.

The figure marks a 13.6 percent increase compared to the same period last year, underscoring the Kingdom's tourism resilience despite global economic headwinds and geopolitical tensions.

Of the total arrivals, over 1.35 million tourists entered through land checkpoints, while 1.01 million arrived by air. Waterway entries accounted for 40,159 visitors.

Thailand remained the Kingdom's leading source market, contributing 674,134 visitors, followed by Vietnam with 410,424 and China with 387,505. The United States also showed strong growth, with more than 90,000 arrivals during the reporting period. Other key source countries

ផ្សារមូលបត្រកម្ពុជា



CSX

MARKET WATCH

JUNE 19, 2025, THURSDAY

Current Index	411
Change	▲ 1.24
%Change	▲ 0.3
Opening	409.26
High	411.19
Low	409.26
Trading Volume (shr)	50,457
Trading Value (KHR)	305,426,900

CSX goes up 1.24 points

THE Cambodia Securities Exchanges (CSX) Index gained 1.24 points or 0.3 percent to close at 411 on Thursday. The index that opened at 409.26 recorded 411.19 as the day's high. The day's low was 409.26.

On the Main Board, PPAP surged 180 riels to move to 13,600 riels. PAS increased 140 riels to settle at 12,380 riels. PWSA added 20 riels to get to 6,500 riels while

CGSM and PEPC gained 10 riels each to 2,430 riels and 2,720 riels respectively.

GTI lost 20 riels to settle at 8,640 riels. MJQE and PPSP moved down 10 riels each to reach 2,020 riels and 2,120 riels respectively.

ABC remained flat at 6,920 riels.

On the Growth Board, DBDE lost 10 riels to reach 2,040 riels while JSL remained flat at 2,830 riels. ■

included South Korea, Japan, Laos, Indonesia, France and the United Kingdom.

The government has set a target of attracting over

seven million international visitors by the end of 2025, reaffirming tourism's vital role in supporting Cambodia's economic development. ■

JICA assesses plans for water management project

Synopsis: The project is designed to strengthen agricultural productivity and climate resilience in Cambodia's southwestern corridor.

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A delegation of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on Wednesday conducted a site visit to the irrigation and drainage project in the Southwest of the capital, aiming to assess construction progress and review a proposal to expand its technical scope.

Mitomori Koji, Head of the JICA Mission in Tokyo, led the



Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) officials from Tokyo inspect the irrigation and drainage project in Kampong Speu province, on June 18. JICA

Japanese experts to inspect the 'Southwest Phnom Penh Irrigation and Drainage Rehabilitation and Improvement Project' in Kampong Speu province, on June 18.

The JICA fact-finding team's visit was coordinated by Pich Veasna, Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Water Resources and

Meteorology (MoWRAM), and also Director of the Southwest Phnom Penh Irrigation and Drainage Rehabilitation and Improvement Project.

According to the MoWRAM announcement, the visit focused on evaluating the possibility of extending construction work,

including pouring concrete at the base of main and secondary canals, and reviewing technical aspects of the proposed project expansion.

The project, which currently spans across Kampong Speu, Kandal and Takeo provinces, has reached approximately 55 percent completion, marking a significant milestone in Cambodia's broader efforts to modernise its irrigation and drainage infrastructure.

The site visit was also attended by Akiko Miyashita, Senior JICA Officer in Cambodia, along with MoWRAM officials, senior technical staff, representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and provincial directors from Kampong Speu and Kandal, and other local authorities.

Veasna said that the JICA delegation expressed strong appreciation for the project's progress and urged the construction company to maintain high-quality standards, adhere strictly to technical and safety

protocols, and accelerate implementation to meet project timelines.

The MoWRAM Under-Secretary also emphasised the importance of ongoing stakeholder coordination to ensure the overall success and long-term operational efficiency.

This project, funded by Japan through JICA, is designed to strengthen agricultural productivity and climate resilience in Cambodia's southwestern corridor.

Scheduled for completion in June 2026, the project spans 36 months and is expected to significantly boost water resource management, benefiting thousands of farming households.

The project is divided into two key sub-projects: the Roleang Chrey sub-project, covering Chbar Mon town and Samraong Tong district in Kampong Speu province, and the Kandal Stung-Bati sub-project, located in Kandal Stung district of Kandal province and Bati district of Takeo province. ■

Cambodia's export of GFT products hits \$6B

Synopsis: The garments, footwear and travel products (GFT) sector is the largest foreign exchange earner for the Kingdom.

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Cambodia exported \$6,137 million of garments, footwear and travel products (GFT) in the past five months, up 23.5 percent from \$4,969 million in the same period in 2024, a report from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

The GDCE report showed that garment and textile exports reached \$4,459 million, up more than 23 percent from \$3,628 million in the same period last year.

Also, \$836 million worth of footwear was exported, up nearly 7 percent, while travel goods equivalent to \$842 million were shipped to international markets, up 7 percent, the report added.

Kaing Monika, Deputy Secretary-General of the Textile, Apparel, Footwear and Travel Goods Association in Cambodia (TAFTAC), said the situation in Cambodia's garment industry is still good despite external pressures, while the recent US tariffs policy has not yet caused any disruption in the sector.

He stated that the decision to place production in a country depends on the country's value, reputation, and compliance level. Before, talks focused only on workers' rights, freedom of association, but now talks include compliance with the social environment, he said at the recent Cambodia Economic Forum.



Cambodia's garment industry is still good despite external pressures, while the recent US tariffs policy has not yet caused any disruption in the sector, an expert says. **KT/Pann Rachana**

It is a combination of various factors to reach the final decision on whether to continue or transfer production to another country, he added.

"We must prepare in advance and continue to strengthen what we can do in our areas of competence, such as the investment environment, strengthening the competitiveness of Cambodia as a whole, especially for our sector, which has many combined factors, including electricity prices, logistics costs, electricity policies, and worker productivity, all related to our country's competitiveness," he said.

The industry is the largest foreign exchange earner for the Kingdom.

The sector currently consists of about 1,538 factories and branches, employing approximately 913,000 workers, mostly women, according to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training's latest report.

Cambodia has recently concluded a second round of trade talks on

Reciprocal Trade with the US, with both sides agreeing on substantial provisions for an agreement aimed at achieving trade benefits for both countries.

Penn Sovicheat, Secretary of State and spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce, said that the ministry has a policy of diversifying markets and diversifying goods, expanding through free trade agreements and encouraging local industries to produce a variety of goods to export to markets.

"In the negotiations, we have a lot of potential to achieve positive results. We have a clear goal of what level of taxes is acceptable and can be negotiated by working closely with garment associations as well as investors. We also have the ability to expand into other sectors," he said.

Last year, the country exported GFT products worth \$13.92 billion, up 23 percent over a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Commerce's report. ■

Minister visits provinces to take stock of food security

More on page 11▶

With the backdrop of recent Thai border closures, he stressed the urgency of safeguarding food production and urged the adoption of price stabilisation measures, crop diversification, and integration into community-based agricultural models to increase market access and resilience.

In Oddar Meanchey on Wednesday, Tina met with officials in Samraong town to evaluate the progress of 1,250 commune-level agricultural officers and the preparation of 350 more officers slated for deployment.

The MAFF Minister advised officials to collaborate with ministry experts through hotline: 1289 to ensure any technical or production support is both economically efficient and trustworthy.

He urged the commune officials to assess the situation and seek additional support from the ministry's experts, if necessary, through the Hotline No 1289 before providing assistance or solutions to farmers, to ensure the quality and economic efficiency of the assistance, as well as the farmers' trust in the officials.

Concluding his three-day mission in Siem Reap, the Minister reaffirmed that food security remains a core pillar of Cambodia's agricultural and economic development strategy, regardless of current geopolitical tensions or future economic uncertainties.

He called on local



Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Dith Tina speaks in one of the meetings in Siem Reap province, yesterday. He urged farmers for safeguarding food production. **MAFF**

authorities to intensify support for farmers through improved production techniques, effective market coordination, and mechanisms to stabilise the prices of key agricultural products.

Tina also stressed the importance of developing cooperative agricultural communities to enhance resilience and collective growth. He noted that capable and responsive local leadership would not only gain public trust but could also lead to greater responsibilities in local government councils.

According to MAFF, the mission involved direct engagement with over 200 commune and district agricultural officials across the four provinces, reflecting the ministry's proactive stance on reinforcing national food security through grassroots-level empowerment and technical coordination. ■

Exports to EU and UK register strong growth

More on page 11▶

The European market continues to play a crucial role in supporting Cambodia's export growth, despite past trade preference adjustments, said Lim Heng, Vice-President of the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce.

Speaking to *Khmer Times*, Heng emphasised the enduring strength of Cambodian exports to Europe. "The European market is very important for Cambodian exports. We know that in the past, we had EBA with Europe. Our exports to Europe have been increasing. Even though we lost 20 percent, this market is still good," he said.

Heng highlighted that while some Cambodian exporters may face challenges due to the recent US tariff measures, opportunities remain in the European and British markets through the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), which continues to offer favourable conditions for Cambodian products.

"For those who may be affected by US tariffs, they can turn to the European and British markets, where we still benefit from the GSP preferential system," he said.

He added that the demand for Cambodian products such as garments, footwear, bicycles, and agricultural goods remains strong in the EU and UK, contributing to

sustained export momentum.

"Cambodian exports will continue to increase towards the European and British markets," Heng affirmed, underscoring the sector's adaptability and resilience amid global trade shifts.

Related to the UK market and efforts to increase Cambodia's exports, the British Embassy in Phnom Penh, responding to questions from *Khmer Times*, has recently outlined several targeted initiatives under the UK Trade Partnerships (UKTP) programme aimed at delivering direct benefits to Cambodian producers.

"In collaboration with the International Trade Centre, the UK

is providing advisory support to Cambodian agricultural associations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)," the embassy said in a statement.

The initiative is designed to strengthen institutional capacity, enhance branding and marketing strategies, and help local producers attain British Retail Consortium (BRC) certification. These efforts aim to increase Cambodia's value-added exports to the UK market.

"We hope to see more Cambodian agricultural exporters take advantage of the UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) in the coming years," the embassy added.

Beyond facilitating trade, the UK is also focused on empowering SMEs, attracting investment, and promoting safe and prosperous employment for local communities.

"We are supporting agricultural businesses to adopt improved methods that can boost productivity," the embassy noted. "These innovations will ultimately deliver greater economic benefits to smallholder farmers, who are a vital part of the supply chain."

The UK's continued engagement seeks to ensure that Cambodia's growing exports translate into inclusive economic growth and long-term sustainability for rural communities. ■

In Preah Sihanouk province, it is located on Sopheap Mongkul Street, Village 2, Sangkat 2, where the Provincial Tourism Department is located, built on an area of 1,775 m², with one building having 4 floors. ■

Iranian missiles hit main hospital in South Israel

TEL AVIV, Israel – An Iranian missile slammed into the main hospital in southern Israel early on Thursday, wounding people and causing “extensive damage,” according to the medical facility. Israeli media aired footage of blown-out windows and heavy black smoke.

Separate Iranian strikes hit a high-rise apartment building in Tel Aviv and other sites in central Israel. At least 40 people were wounded, according to Israel’s Magen David Adom rescue service.

Israel, meanwhile, carried out strikes on Iran’s Arak heavy water reactor, its latest attack on Iran’s sprawling nuclear programme, on the seventh day of a conflict that began with a surprise wave of Israeli airstrikes targeting military sites, senior officers and nuclear scientists.

Iran has fired hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel, though most have been shot down by Israel’s multi-tiered air defences, which detect incoming fire and shoot down missiles heading toward population centres and critical infrastructure. Israeli officials acknowledge it is imperfect.

The missile hit the Soroka Medical Centre, which has over 1,000 beds and provides services to the approximately 1 million residents of Israel’s south.

A hospital statement said several parts of the medical centre were damaged and that the emergency room was treating several minor injuries. The hospital was closed to all new patients except for life-threatening cases.

Many hospitals in Israel activated emergency plans in the past week, converting underground parking to hospital floors and move patients underground, especially those who are on ventilators or are difficult to move quickly.

Iranian state TV, meanwhile, reported the attack on the Arak site, saying there was “no radiation danger whatsoever.” An Iranian state television reporter, speaking live in the



A woman is evacuated from the site of a direct hit from an Iranian missile strike in Ramat Gan, Israel, yesterday. AP

nearby town of Khondab, said the facility had been evacuated and there was no damage to civilian areas around the reactor.

Israel had warned earlier yesterday morning it would attack the facility and urged the public to flee the area. The Israeli military said yesterday’s round of airstrikes targeted Tehran and other areas of Iran, without elaborating.

The strikes came a day after Iran’s supreme leader rejected U.S. calls for surrender and warned that any military involvement by the Americans would cause “irreparable damage to them.” Israel had lifted some restrictions on daily life on

Wednesday, suggesting the missile threat from Iran on its territory was easing.

Already, Israel’s campaign has targeted Iran’s enrichment site at Natanz, centrifuge workshops around Tehran and a nuclear site in Isfahan. Its strikes have also killed top generals and nuclear scientists.

A Washington-based Iranian human rights group said at least 639 people, including 263 civilians, have been killed in Iran and more than 1,300 wounded. In retaliation, Iran has fired some 400 missiles and hundreds of drones, killing at least 24 people in Israel and wounding hundreds. AP ■

Putin says NATO rearming not a ‘threat’ to Russia

ST PETERSBURG, Russia – Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that NATO’s push to ramp up defence spending was not a “threat” to Russia, days before the alliance was set to sign-off on a plan to boost its military capacity across Europe.

In a late-night press conference, the Russian leader also said his troops would not stop pushing forward in Ukraine and sought to undermine his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky.

The Western military alliance will hold a crucial summit in The Hague next week to discuss increasing defence spending to 5% of GDP, under pressure from US President Donald Trump.

Putin has cast his offensive in Ukraine as part of a wider conflict between Russia and US-led NATO, which has been Ukraine’s staunchest backer since Russia launched its offensive in February 2022.

“We do not consider any rearmament by NATO to be a threat to the Russian Federation, because we are self-sufficient in terms of ensuring our own security,” Putin said at a televised press conference in St Petersburg.

Russia is “constantly modernising our



Russia’s President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) on Wednesday. AFP

armed forces and defensive capabilities,” Putin said, adding that it made “no sense” for NATO to spend more money on arms.

Though he conceded higher spending by NATO would create some “specific” challenges for Russia, he brushed them off.

“We will counter all threats that arise. There is no doubt about that,” Putin added.

Kyiv is seeking security guarantees from NATO as part of any deal to end the fighting, more than three years after Russia ordered its full-scale military offensive.

Moscow has shown little willingness to back down, with Putin saying yesterday that Russia had the “strategic advantage” on the battlefield.

“Our troops are advancing along the entire line of contact. Every day, more or less, but every day they go forward. And the advance will continue,” he said.

Putin also sought to justify his three-year campaign against Ukraine, questioned Zelensky’s legitimacy and dismissed civilian deaths from Russia’s daily aerial attacks.

He said he was ready to meet with his Ukrainian counterpart, but only during a “final phase” of negotiations on ending the three-year conflict.

Moscow has also rejected proposals for a full and unconditional ceasefire, and outlined a raft of hardline peace demands - including that Kyiv cede more territory and renounce Western military support. AFP ■

Briefly

IAEA finds no proof of Iranian nukes

VIENNA – The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has found no evidence that Iran is making a “systematic effort” to produce a nuclear weapon, according to the agency’s chief, Rafael Grossi.

Israel began bombing Iran on Friday, asserting that the country was on the brink of developing a nuclear bomb. The sides have been exchanging retaliatory strikes ever since.

US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he believes Tehran was “very close” to obtaining the nuclear weapon, contradicting early statements from his director of national intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, who stated that Iran “is not building” one. Iranian authorities insist that their nuclear program is purely peaceful and that they have every right to pursue it.

The Iranians may have enough enriched uranium, but in order to turn it into a nuclear weapon, technology and extensive testing is also required, Grossi said. RT ■

US recovers \$225 mil in crypto scam

NEW YORK – The US government said on Wednesday it recovered \$225 million in the largest seizure yet of money stolen in a cryptocurrency confidence scam.

The FBI and the US Secret Service used blockchain analyses and other investigative techniques to determine that these millions came from the theft and laundering of funds from victims of cryptocurrency investment fraud schemes, the US Attorney’s Office said in a statement.

Dozens of people in the United States and more than 400 victims around the world thought they were making legitimate crypto investments when they were in fact being scammed, the statement said.

The scheme involved a savvy blockchain-based money laundering network that carried out hundreds of thousands of transactions to hide the source and ownership of the stolen money, it added.

Cryptocurrency investment fraud caused more than \$5.8 billion in reported losses in 2024 alone, the statement said. AFP ■

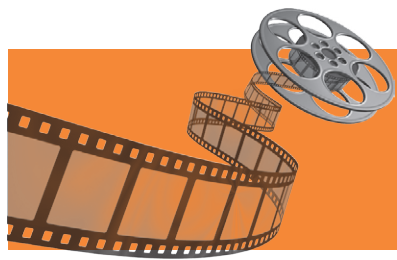
Abortion decriminalised in England, Wales

LONDON – Women in England and Wales will no longer run the risk of being charged with a criminal offence for terminating a pregnancy beyond the 24-week stage, after lawmakers changed legislation that dates back to 1861.

The amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill was hailed as the biggest upgrade to England and Wales’ abortion laws since terminations were partially legalised in 1967 — for pregnancies before the 24-week stage and with the approval of two doctors.

Scotland has a devolved parliament and will consider the issue separately.

While women can no longer be prosecuted for terminating a pregnancy beyond the 24-week stage, such late-term procedures remain prohibited and medical professionals assisting with them could technically still be prosecuted. China Daily ■



REEL TALK

FUBAR

SEASON 2 FALLS SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE



Arnold Schwarzenegger as Luke Brunner in 'FUBAR'. Netflix



Arnold Schwarzenegger and Carrie-Anne Moss have an excellent chemistry together. Netflix

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The arrival of *FUBAR* season 2 on Netflix this week may prove that Arnold Schwarzenegger has still got it despite being 77 years old. Unfortunately, unlike the first season, it fails to bring the hype to viewers.

As season 2 kicks off, Luke Brunner (Arnold Schwarzenegger), his family, and the ragtag spy squad are climbing the walls with cabin fever, stuck together in a stifling safe house. But by the time the finale rolls around, they've tangoed with danger and each other — tangling with the Swedish mafia, piloting submersibles, saving a US Space Force base from

disaster, befriending a surprisingly loveable pig, and setting off enough explosions to make Michael Bay blush.

Through all the chaos, bonds have been broken and reformed, trust has been tested, and the team emerges somewhere entirely new — not just geographically, but emotionally.

That's the burning question crackling at the heart of season 2. Who is Dante Cress, really? All season long, he's been the puppet master in the shadows — hell-bent on plunging the US into darkness, igniting World War III with Russia, and unleashing global pandemonium. He's been pulling the strings behind Greta (Carrie-Anne Moss) and Chips (Guy Burnet), whispering orders from the shadows. But while his chaos is

front and centre, his true identity remains shrouded in mystery — a ghost in the machine no one's been able to trace.

Now, a good thing first. Schwarzenegger and Moss spark well enough on screen — two former spies and former flames whose shared past throws a wrench into his freshly reignited romance with his ex-wife. Their chemistry stirs just enough tension to raise eyebrows, from sceptical superiors to a suspicious daughter, injecting a flicker of intrigue into the show's otherwise breezy rhythm.

Also, *FUBAR* still plays it light and loose, bouncing from one mission to the next aboard a cargo plane, sticking to a rinse-and-repeat formula that mostly amounts to: action beat, quip, safe house shenanigans, repeat. The frequent detours back to their

chaotic safe house serve as comic relief, with clashing egos trapped under one roof and driving each other slowly mad. It's far from groundbreaking — designed more as background noise than gripping drama.

Beyond the explosions and wisecracks, *FUBAR* somehow manages to feel a little... flat. Rather than pushing boundaries or deepening its story, creator Nick Santora leans harder into worn-out action tropes and over-worked one-liners. The result is a second season that struts like a blockbuster but stumbles more like a low-budget.

Still, seeing the "I'll be back" moment may be rather more satisfying than an entire episode. It is obvious that many would watch it due to the nostalgic values, with Arnie at the centre, of course! ■

Discover

ELIO

A Cosmic Adventure Now Showing in Cambodia

FROM the creators of *Coco* and *Inside Out*, Disney and Pixar's newest animated film, *Elio*, has finally landed in Cambodia — bringing families a fresh, original adventure filled with emotion, imagination, and laugh-out-loud moments. This isn't a sequel or remake. *Elio* is a brand-new story that speaks to both kids and adults in the way only Pixar can.

The film follows 11-year-old Elio Solis, a shy and artistic boy who's unexpectedly beamed into space by aliens — and mistakenly named Earth's ambassador to the galaxy. Thrown into an interstellar world of bizarre creatures and high-stakes diplomacy, Elio must find the courage to be himself in a universe that doesn't quite understand him. It's a cosmic coming-of-age tale packed with vibrant animation, heartfelt moments, and

just the right touch of sci-fi adventure.

More than just entertainment, *Elio* delivers a message that resonates with Cambodian families: the importance of self-acceptance, empathy, and unconditional support from loved ones. Children will enjoy the imaginative world and fast-paced fun, while parents will connect with the emotional depth and family dynamics at the heart of the story.

To ensure everyone can enjoy the film, *Elio* is screening in 2D, 3D, and Dolby Atmos, with Khmer and Chinese subtitles available at selected cinemas across Cambodia. Families can experience the movie in their preferred language and format — making it accessible for all ages.

It's a must-see for families this June. Officially released on 19 June 2025, *Elio* is



Elio: Heart, Humour, and Aliens. Westec Media

now showing in cinemas across Cambodia. Whether you're looking for a weekend treat, a school holiday activity, or simply a film that brings everyone together, *Elio* delivers

a visually stunning, emotionally rich journey for all. Book your tickets now at www.legend.com.kh and don't miss the most heartwarming space adventure of the year! ■

Real held, Man City, Juve win Club World Cup openers

PHILADELPHIA, United States – Real Madrid were held to a 1-1 draw by Saudi Arabia’s Al Hilal in their opening match of the FIFA Club World Cup, while Manchester City and Juventus both claimed convincing victories on Wednesday.

Real’s Group H fixture, played at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, marked Xabi Alonso’s debut as head coach. The Spaniard handed starts to new signings Trent Alexander-Arnold and Dean Huijsen, but the absence of Kylian Mbappe due to illness was felt.

Youngster Gonzalo Garcia opened the scoring on 31 minutes after good work by Rodrygo, but Al Hilal equalised before half-time with Ruben Neves converting from the spot after Raul Asencio’s foul. Federico Valverde had the chance to seal a win deep in stoppage time, but his penalty was saved by Yassine Bounou.

“We had good control in the second half and some chances, but we could have done better. There are principles we can build on,” Alonso said after the match.

Elsewhere in Group H, RB Salzburg beat Pachuca 2-1 in a storm-interrupted match in Cincinnati. The game was suspended for over an hour due to lightning.

Foden leads City past Wydad
Earlier in Philadelphia, Manchester City began their campaign



Federico Valverde of Real Madrid is taking a penalty kick during the group H match between Real Madrid C.F. of Spain and Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia at the FIFA Club World Cup 2025, held at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, United States, on Thursday. Xinhua

with a composed 2-0 victory over Moroccan side Wydad Casablanca.

Phil Foden struck in the second minute and later assisted Jeremy Doku, who headed home from a corner to double the lead before half-time.

New signings Tijjani Reijnders and Rayan Cherki featured for Pep Guardiola’s side, who dominated for large spells in humid conditions.

Rico Lewis was sent off late for a dangerous tackle, but Guardiola

remained upbeat. “It’s never easy with the heat and humidity, but I saw many good things,” he said. “Now we prepare for the next one with fresh legs.”

City face Al Ain in Atlanta on Sunday in their second Group G match.

In Washington, Juventus made a bold statement in Group G with a 5-0 demolition of Al Ain.

Randal Kolo Muani and

Francisco Conceicao both netted braces, while Kenan Yildiz added the fifth. Juve had earlier visited the White House, presenting a club shirt to President Donald Trump.

“We did what we had to do—start strong and win,” Conceicao said.

The second round of matches begins Thursday, with Inter Miami taking on Porto and PSG facing Botafogo. **AFP ■**

Montes scores twice as Mexico reach Gold Cup knockout stage

TEXAS, United States – Defender César Montes scored twice in six second-half minutes to lift Mexico past Suriname 2-0 on Wednesday and secure a place in the CONCACAF Gold Cup knockout round.

The Lokomotiv Moscow centre-back struck in the 57th and 63rd minutes at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, giving Mexico their second win of the tournament after a 3-2 victory over the Dominican Republic in the opener.

Montes, 28, had only one goal in 53 previous appearances for Mexico before the tournament, but now finds himself joint top scorer at the Gold Cup alongside Costa Rica’s Manfred Ugalde, with three goals apiece.

“I’m excited about the goals, but the priority is the clean sheet,” Montes said. “Obviously, I didn’t expect to score like this – that’s the striker’s job – but if I can help the

team, I’ll do it.”

After a sluggish first half where Suriname held firm, Mexico found the breakthrough when Montes rose to head in from a corner. Moments later, he doubled the lead by finishing off a scramble in the box.

The result sends Mexico to six points at the top of Group A, ahead of Costa Rica on goal difference. The two sides will meet on Sunday in Las Vegas to determine the group winner. Both have already qualified for the quarter-finals.

Mexico’s coach, Javier Aguirre, said the group had been far from easy, despite the perfect record.

“We knew it was going to be tough. The results might make it look smooth, but these games were hard-fought,” said Aguirre. “We had to stay focused and work through some early frustrations.”

Suriname, meanwhile, is eliminated after back-to-back losses. They



Mexico’s César Montes celebrates his second goal with teammate Julián Quiñones during their Group A Gold Cup match against Suriname in Arlington on Wednesday. **AP**

will face the Dominican Republic, also winless, in a final group match with only pride at stake.

The Costa Rica clash also carries emotional weight, as their coach, Miguel Herrera, is a former Mexico boss who led El Tri at the 2014 World Cup. Montes said the team is prepared for a fierce encounter.

“We’ve got an intense match coming,” Montes said. “They’ve got a good side, and Miguel knows us well. He’ll want to beat us, but we’ll be ready to fight for first place.”

With the knockout stage approaching, Aguirre indicated that squad rotation could be possible but stressed the need to maintain momentum.

“We’ll review the group and see who needs rest, but finishing top is important for the next phase,” he said. “We’ll treat the next game like a final.”

The Gold Cup, the region’s premier international competition, continues through July with the final set to be played in Los Angeles. **AP ■**

Samsonova saves two match points to stun Pegula in Berlin

BERLIN, Germany – Liudmila Samsonova pulled off a dramatic upset at the Berlin Open on Wednesday, saving two match points to defeat world number three Jessica Pegula 6-7 (8), 7-5, 7-6 (5) in a marathon second-round clash lasting over three hours.

The 20th-ranked Russian fired 18 aces to outlast the American in a gruelling 3-hour, 21-minute encounter on grass and book her place in the quarter-finals.

“I can’t believe that I am here standing, it’s incredible,” Samsonova said. “Maybe with the adrenaline right now I’m OK, but I think later it’s not going to be so OK.”

Samsonova, who also needed three sets to beat Naomi Osaka on Tuesday, was on the brink of elimination at 4-5 in the final set. But she held her nerve to fend off two match points before clinching victory in the deciding tie-break.

Defending champion Pegula looked in control after edging the opening set and was just two points from victory, but failed to close out the match as Samsonova raised her level under pressure.

Elsewhere in Berlin, top seed Aryna Sabalenka’s match against qualifier Rebeka Masarova was suspended overnight due to slippery court conditions. Sabalenka had taken the first set 6-2 before play was halted for safety reasons.

Earlier in the day, Tunisia’s Ons Jabeur breezed past fourth seed Jasmine Paolini 6-1, 6-3 to reach the quarter-finals.

Jabeur, a Wimbledon finalist in 2022 and 2023, dominated from the baseline and broke serve five times to dispatch Paolini in just over an hour.

Paolini, fresh off her French Open doubles triumph with Sara Errani, was playing her first singles match since losing in the fourth round at Roland Garros. She reached last year’s Wimbledon final but struggled to find her rhythm against Jabeur’s variety and precision.

With her win, Samsonova joins Jabeur in the last eight, while Sabalenka will resume her suspended match on Thursday.

The Berlin Open continues to serve as a key warm-up event for Wimbledon, offering top players vital match time on grass ahead of the Grand Slam, which begins on June 30. **AP ■**

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SPORTS

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▶ PAGE 19



Cambodian women gear up for first-ever home friendly against Guam

Synopsis: Cambodia's national women's football team prepares for a historic home friendly as part of their build-up to the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 qualifiers, which the Kingdom will host later this month.

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The Cambodian women's national football team is preparing for a landmark moment in its history — their first-ever international friendly on home soil.

Scheduled for June 25 at the National Olympic Stadium in Phnom Penh, the match will see Cambodia face Guam in a high-profile evening fixture set for 7 pm. The match serves as a crucial tune-up for the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 qualifiers, which Cambodia is also hosting from June 23 to July 5.

The squad has kicked off training at the National Football Academy Centre in Takeo province, with 28 players selected for the preliminary camp. Former national striker Khuon Laboravy, now head coach, is leading the preparations.

Among the standout players are

striker Yon Yeurn of NagaWorld FC and young forward Soeurn Vipha of Phnom Penh Crown, both expected to play key roles. The players represent eight clubs nationwide, though most are drawn from top-tier teams Visakha FC and Phnom Penh Crown.

Only 23 players will make the final squad to face Guam, with selections based on form, fitness, and tactical fit.

This fixture marks more than just a game for Cambodia. It represents the growing profile of women's football in the Kingdom. Playing in front of home fans is expected to boost morale and showcase the sport's development.

Cambodia is currently ranked 118th in FIFA's Women's World Rankings, while Guam sits at 96th. Though not football heavyweights, Guam brings experience and steady progress to the match.

The AFC Women's Asian Cup



Players from the Cambodian women's national football team train at the National Football Academy Centre in Takeo on Wednesday, June 18. Football Federation of Cambodia

2026 qualifiers will see Cambodia placed in Group G alongside Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia. Cambodia begins its group stage on June 29 against Hong Kong, followed by the Philippines on July 2 and Saudi Arabia on July 5.

A recent development in the coaching setup has brought added attention. On June 14, the Football Federation of Cambodia (FFC) announced that Conor Nestor, head coach of Boeung Ket FC, will serve

as interim head coach for the qualifiers.

Nestor, 41, known for his tactical acumen and passion for development, has joined to support Laboravy, not to replace him. He clarified his role via social media, stating: "I'm not here to replace Laboravy. I'm here to support. He's already done a great job."

He also revealed that his involvement came at the request of Puth Thyda, FFC's women's football committee president. "She asked me

to assist. I've seen how hard she works for Cambodian football. I couldn't say no," said Nestor.

Whether Laboravy will remain on the bench during the qualifiers or move to a different role is still to be confirmed. However, both coaches have expressed mutual respect and a shared goal: to see the team succeed.

"Please come support these girls," Nestor said. "They love this game. They love this country. They deserve your cheers." ■

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