

No overseas fans allowed at 2022 Olympics

NEXT year's Winter Olympics in Beijing will be held without spectators from overseas with tickets restricted to fans living in China because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on September 29.

The IOC said only fully vaccinated participants would be exempt from a 21-day quarantine. Athletes who

can provide a "justified medical exemption" will have their cases considered.

All attendees will enter a strict bubble upon arrival that covers Games-related areas and stadiums as well as accommodation, catering and the opening and closing ceremonies.

Specific requirements on Covid-19 countermeasures for spectators from

the mainland and the details of ticketing arrangements are under discussion and development and will be released to the public in due course once they are finalised.

Besides athletes and some delegation officials who are accompanying athletes living in the villages, all participants travelling to Beijing will have to stay in Beijing 2022-contract-

ed hotels endorsed as compliant with the Covid-19 countermeasures for the Games.

The decisions, announced by the IOC but taken by Chinese organisers, are a foretaste of a package of measures to be released in October designed to prevent the Games from turning into a source of contamination.

Spectators were banned from almost all venues at the Tokyo 2020 Games after it was delayed a year by the global health crisis.

All domestic and international Games participants and workforce in the bubble, known as the "closed-loop management system", will be tested daily.

The 2022 Beijing Olympics is scheduled for February 4-20. AFP, CHINA DAILY ■

Ministry sets the record straight on MT Strovolos, her crew, crude

May Kunmakara

THE "theft and/or misappropriation" of some 295,000 barrels of crude oil belonging to Cambodia by the owners, managers and crew of a tanker – detained by Indonesian authorities in July – and their accomplices "constitute criminal acts pursuant to the relevant Cambodian laws".

This is according to a new statement issued by the Cambodian Ministry of Mines and Energy to affirm the Kingdom's ownership of the crude oil and to set the record straight in the contentious case of the Bahamian-flagged *MT Strovolos*.

The Indonesian Navy on August 25 said it was holding the oil tanker, and interrogating its Bangladeshi captain and two compatriots, 13 Indians and a trio from Myanmar at its base on Indonesia's Batam island, near Singapore.

And on September 22, Batam District Court sentenced captain Sazdedeen SM to 15 days in prison and fined him 100 million rupiah (\$7,000) in case number 531/Pid.B/2021/PN Btm for anchoring the vessel in Indonesian waters without permission, BenarNews reported citing a court document of the ruling.

Indonesian media earlier reported that the captain violated Article 317 in conjunction with Article 193 Paragraph 1 of Law No 17/2008 on shipping, for which the maximum imprisonment is one year and a maximum fine of 200 million

rupiah (\$14,000).

Naval authorities have said the tanker was loaded with 297,686.518 barrels (nearly 47.33 million litres) of oil and en route to Batam, from Thailand.

The charterer of the *MT Strovolos* is a company belonging to KrisEnergy group companies, which on December 29 extracted Cambodia's first drops of oil, from the offshore Cambodia Block A concession.

World Tankers Management Pte Ltd (WTM), the Singapore-headquartered operator of the vessel, on September 27 maintained that the crew were "innocent" of any wrongdoing and being held "in violation of their human rights", and that Cambodia's assertion that the oil cargo was transported illegally was "without foundation".

"The Government of Cambodia has not provided any proof to the owners to support its claim that it owns the cargo on board the vessel," it claimed, calling on the Indonesian government to order the crew's immediate release.

In response to WTM's human rights violations comments, the ministry said: "At all stages, the Royal Government of Cambodia has respected, and will continue to respect, the human rights of the crew."

"However, always consistent with that, where criminal offences are committed, they should be legally prosecuted. Nothing is unethical about doing so."

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Five Khmer antiquities arrived at Phnom Penh International Airport on Wednesday night. CULTURE MINISTRY

First five 'Latchford' antiquities returned

Youn Dara

THE first five of the more than 100 stone and bronze Khmer antiquities being returned to Cambodia by the family of the controversial collector and dealer Douglas Latchford – who passed away last year in Thailand – have arrived in Phnom Penh, according to the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.

Latchford – who styled himself a "rescuer" of antiquities rather than a looter – had already agreed to return some of his collection to Cambodia prior to his death from illness, which came while he was under felony indictment in the US and fighting his extradition there for his alleged decades-long involvement in trafficking stolen Khmer antiquities.

In a press statement, the

ministry said the arrival of these antiquities was being carried out as part of the agreement for the return of Khmer cultural properties between the Cambodian government and Latchford's family made in September last year, soon after his death.

"In this initial stage, five Khmer masterpieces – including a stone sculpture of Shiva and Skanda originally from Koh Ker, a half-

male and half-female statue and a bronze boat prow will be returned from the UK to their homeland of Cambodia on September 29, 2021.

"These five statues will be taken to Cambodia's National Museum in Phnom Penh for experts to evaluate, clean and repair them if necessary before putting them on display. Public exhibition of

CONTINUED – PAGE 2

1 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 9

National

Five statues safely in care of Nat'l Museum

Continued from page 1

these national treasures will begin with a ceremony and launch event held at an appropriate time to be announced by the government," it said.

Culture ministry spokesman Hab Touch told *The Post* on September 30 that the five statues arrived at Phnom Penh International Airport at 5pm and were safely on the grounds of the National Museum by 9pm. "The team working on the return of these items spent a lot of time and effort navigating through the legal procedures and making arrangements to begin bringing home [the collection] from the four countries where the items are located, and the Covid-19 pandemic made the job even harder.

"We made plans originally with the expectation that we'd be bringing these antiquities to Cambodia starting in March, but due to the pandemic interrupting travel and the lockdowns in some countries, their repatriation was delayed. But we've learned a lot from the experience and I think next time we'll be able to get this done much faster," he said.

According to Touch, Latchford's huge collection of Khmer antiquities was said to be made up of the very best items he had acquired

— which he almost always kept for himself — over his decades-long career as an antiquities dealer that began in the 1960's. They were now spread out across the four countries, many of them on display in his homes.

This complicated their return because the ministry has had to collaborate with four different embassies and officials working under different laws on antiquities that can restrict their cross-border movement to prevent illegal trafficking if the foreign government's authorisation is not first provided, he said.

Back in January, the culture ministry announced that following Latchford's death — which came amid a three-year negotiation with him to return the collection — his daughter had decided to simply return the entirety of Latchford's Khmer holdings, which consisted of over 100 ancient Khmer cultural artifacts rendered in stone, bronze and other mediums.

In June, the US government returned 27 Cambodian antiquities — including Angkorian Buddhist and Hindu statues — to Cambodia. The antiquities had been smuggled to the US and put on sale by black or gray market dealers and then recovered by US authorities during law enforcement operations. ■



Five Khmer relics were repatriated from the UK on Wednesday. AKP



The transport ministry warns that it will continue to strictly enforce weight limit restrictions on vehicles. SPM

PM releases 229 seized lorries

Long Kimmarita

IN ORDER to bolster Cambodia's economic recovery efforts from the damage inflicted by the Covid-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Hun Sen has decided to return over 200 overweight cargo vehicles that were impounded by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport over the past year to penalise their owners for breaking Cambodia's transport sector vehicle weight regulations.

He announced the decision on September 30.

"[To] support the revival of the private sector by exempting and easing punitive regulations while providing opportunities to these beleaguered business owners — for the occasion of the Pchum Ben holiday — I hereby order the ministry to return the 229 vehicles they are holding in impound for overweight transport of goods to their owners as a gesture that could mean the immediate resumption of suspended

business activities," he said.

Hun Sen also emphasised that any vehicles whose owners had not yet paid the fines for overweight cargo had to do so first in order to have their property returned. He advised that in the future they must strictly adhere to and respect all provisions of the road traffic law to avoid repeating these mistakes.

"I would like to commend the public works ministry and all relevant authorities at all levels for their strict implementation of the transport standards on restricting overweight transport," Hun Sen said.

Ministry spokesman Pal Chandara said authorities would return the offending vehicles to their owners ahead of schedule as long as the fines were paid.

However, he warned business owners and their truck drivers that the ministry will continue with strict enforcement of these measures going forward and any new offences will again result in vehicle impoundment.

"The ministry has no plans to

ease enforcement on the legal limits for overweight vehicles and we will continue to impound them without exception unless decided otherwise [by the prime minister].

"In addition, the ministry will strive to disseminate information more widely about the law so that everyone will learn the rules and follow them," he said.

Lim Mony, the owner of a cargo truck currently sitting in the ministry impound lot, expressed joy at the news and pledged it would not happen again.

"I'm the truck's driver and owner. That truck alone is my entire business and livelihood. I will do everything I can to follow the law from now on. Right now I am overjoyed and I thank [Hun Sen] for answering the petition for relief, because it means everything to me," he said.

Kong Sovann, a public health specialist and director of the International Safety Fund Programme, said the wisdom of the decision depends on the policies pursued going for-

ward once the economic crisis caused by the pandemic is no longer an immediate factor.

However, he understood why the exception was granted and said it made sense to do it now as the one-year anniversary of the stepped-up enforcement of the law approached and the owners still had to pay their fines.

He also cautioned the government to be mindful of the importance of preventing private industry from harming the common good because the roads are common property and need to be protected and respected by everyone.

"The owners should at least sign a letter promising not to repeat the offence, with increased penalties set for any repeat offenders. But I think this exception will probably be a one-time thing. In the future they can't keep using Covid-19 as an excuse to break the law and nobody can play dumb or pretend shock if their truck is impounded for a second time," he said. ■

Gov't bans broadcast of Tamil Tigers movie

Voun Dara

MINISTER of Information Khieu Kanharith have told the owners of television stations to ban the broadcast of the movie *Methagu* at the request of the Sri Lankan government, saying the movie reflects the life of the former Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). He said the group was one of the most brutal terrorist organisations in the world.

In a letter dated September 23, Kanharith said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation had received a request from Sri Lanka asking Cambodia to help prevent the film's broadcast.

"Methagu reflects the life of the former terrorist organisation LTTE. It was directed by Velupillai Prabhakaran and produced by the Tamil Eelam Film Society, which identifies LTTE as one of the most brutal terrorist organi-

sations in the world," he said.

According to the letter, *Methagu* is currently shared on social media, websites and the BS Value app.

Information ministry spokesman Meas Sophorn told *The Post* on September 29 that the ministry had informed owners of all television stations not to broadcast the film.

"As stated in the ministry's letter, the movie was produced by a terrorist organisation and is related to terrorists. The ministry cites this reason at the request of the foreign ministry, confirmed through a letter from Sri Lanka to Cambodia," he said.

Sophorn stated that before the ministry's announcement, media and television stations in Cambodia had yet to broadcast the movie. Therefore, the ministry provides this information in advance to the public and TV stations and other types of media not to broadcast it. ■



Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA)

Project: Clearing for Results IV

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Mine Clearance Projects in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Pailin

The Royal Government of Cambodia, represented by the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) now invites humanitarian mine clearance operators accredited by the CMAA to submit compliant proposals for the following Mine Clearance Projects:

1. Battambang mine clearance project,
2. Banteay Meanchey mine clearance project, and
3. Pailin mine clearance project.

RFP documents can be downloaded from www.cmaa.gov.kh or obtained on request to procurement@cmiaa.gov.kh or moulekachea@gmail.com

Proposals must be delivered to the address given below before 15:00, local time, Cambodia on 8 November 2021. Late proposal will be rejected.

The address referred to above is:

Procurement Unit, CMAA Office, Street 273 Corner 516, Sangkat Toul Sangke, Khan Russey Keo, Phnom Penh. Tel: 092 222 390, Email: procurement@cmiaa.gov.kh or moulekachea@gmail.com



CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR TRANSPORTATION AND CASUAL LABOUR SERVICES SHORT-LIST

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Cambodia is seeking expression of interest from capable **1. Transporters** and **2. Casual Labour companies** for including in the WFP Services shortlists.

The transportation services will be expected to transport food and non-food items from Sihanouk Ville/Phnom Penh ports of entry to WFP's warehouse and distribution points throughout Cambodia. The casual labour services will be done at WFP's warehouse in Phnom Penh.

All interested suppliers are invited to download the WFP transportation questionnaires from the Internet link <https://bit.ly/3kAGDxW> and Labour Services <https://bit.ly/2XPbJLY> or by request an electronic copy through an email address: phnompenh.procurement@wfp.org. Please note a follow-up interview may be required.

All companies that meet the qualification criteria for inclusion in the transportation and casual labour services shortlists will be subsequently invited to bid for a one year services.

The form is to be completed and Expression of Interest documentation should be submitted either via electronic copy in PDF form through email phnompenh.procurement@wfp.org or via sealed envelope sent to the below address with the title submission of Expression of Interest (in English Language) **by 17:00 local time on 18 October 2021**

World Food Programme - Cambodia
House No.108, Street 63/corner Street 208, Sangkat Boeung Raing, Khan Daun Penh, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia

Note: Existing WFP food suppliers need not apply.

Personalised plates adds revenue to state coffers

Long Kimmarita

THE Ministry of Public Works and Transport has sold more than 180,000 special and personalised number plates, collecting more than \$61 million since the sales were launched in 2017.

But in the first nine months of this year, sales have dropped by 4.8 per cent compared to the same period last year.

The ministry revealed the figure during a Facebook live show to answer queries from the public on the subject on September 30.

Ministry secretary of state Koy Sodany – the speaker in the live show and head of the committee for the sale of special and personalised number plates – said that since the launch, the ministry has sold a total of 179,034 special plates, collecting \$46,578,158.

The sales of personalised number plates, which began at the beginning of 2020, brought in \$14,978,151 with 7,578 plates sold

“The sale of these plates in the first nine months of this year dropped 4.8 per cent compared to the same period last year due to Covid-19,” she said.

Sodany noted that in the first nine months of this year,



An SUV bearing personalised number plates is seen in Phnom Penh's Daun Penh district in February. HEAN RANGSEY

sales of the number plates earned \$12 million, compared to around \$13 million over the same period last year.

She expected that the sale of these number plates will increase after the pandemic.

According to the ministry, a personalised plate has the word “Cambodia” at the top, with one to eight letters and numbers on the next line. It contains special arrangements of letters and numbers, including people’s names if they so desire.

On the right side, there is a QR Code which has information about the vehicle. The number plate can be purchased online through vehicle.mpwt.gov.kh.

Sodany said each personalised plate costs from two million to one billion riel (\$500 to \$250,000). The price can be higher, depending on public bidding. The plate can be used for a lifetime by the purchaser and can also be sold if the owner sells the vehicle.

Kong Ratanak, director of

the Institute for Road Safety, said the use of such plates has no negative impact. He said the plates not only gives well-off users more options but also generate more income for the state coffers.

“Cambodia still has road traffic safety problems, but it is related to the behaviour of road users and not to the plates,” he said.

Ratanak urged the ministry to look into ways to improve infrastructure such as lane lines and improving roads. ■

Holiday spread will test Kingdom's plan for contact tracing

Mom Kunthea

AS THE three-day Pchum Ben holiday is approaching, Ministry of Health spokesperson Or Vandine called on authorities in the capital and provinces to ready the tracing mechanism for Covid-19.

Speaking while attending a closing ceremony of the vaccination campaign in Monduliri province on September 29, Vandine said Prime Minister Hun Sen had retained the Pchum Ben public

days ahead of the holiday.

As people are normally leaving towns and the city for their home province, Vandine said authorities should also organise means of transportation for those who do not have their own vehicles. The drivers have to strictly practice preventative health measures.

Svay Sam Eang, Monduliri provincial governor said on September 29 that he had already met with provincial officials to prepare for the holiday.

“If we don’t come up with an effective tracing mechanism then sooner or later we’re going to see an outbreak”

holiday from October 5-7, but authorities have to be prepared for tracing the disease.

“We must have an effective tracing mechanism and enforce it. When many people take holidays, and there are those who do not properly carry out preventative measures,” she said.

“If we don’t have an effective-tracing mechanism, sooner or later, we will see an outbreak,” he said, adding that authorities must be ready at resorts three

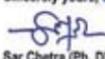
“The provincial administration has already made plans. We will review resorts that have not been affected nor

have a high risk of transmission. We will allow such resorts to reopen by following health measures such as taking people’s temperature and hand sanitising,” he said.

Prime Minister Hun Sen on September 25 urged people who are travelling to natural resorts to strictly follow health measures. ■

Kingdom of Cambodia
Nation Religion King
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)
Cambodia Agricultural Sector Diversification Project (CASDP)
IDA Credit No. 6366-KH

SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE
National Social Safeguards Supervision Consultant (MAFF-CS-36)

- The Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia has received a Credit of US\$91.01 million from International Development Association (IDA) for the project costs including and the Government's support in form of counterpart financing amounts to US\$10.00 million, including the equivalent of US\$4 million in kind contributions, the use of office space, staff costs and utilities expenses, and US\$6 million contributing to the component 2 of public infrastructure support to the total costs of US\$29.32 million would be joint financing with counterpart funding with pro rata basis.
- The project will be implemented over a period of six years. Institutional arrangements for implementation will follow the Government's institutional structure, with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in the lead as the executing agency (EA), and including the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) and the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM) as implementing agencies for the related public infrastructure support. The Ministry of Economy and Finance will oversee the financial services support (subcomponent 1.2). EA and IAs will establish implementation project team(s) (PT) with experts and expertise from direct and relevant technical, administrative, environmental and social safeguards, procurement and finance units. Strategic direction and guidance for the management and operation of the project will be provided by a high-level Project Steering Committee, chaired by MAFF. Coordination support for day-to-day planning and implementation will be provided by the Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water Secretariat (TWG A&W – Secretariat). Roles, responsibilities, and procedures are detailed in the Project Operational Manual (POM). Competitively hired TSPs (firms and NGOs) allocated to specific geographical project areas, will support MAFF in the implementation of subcomponent 1.1. For technical level implementation, the provision of services and infrastructure will follow beneficiaries' guidance as elaborated in the DPs. POs and SMAs determine and express their needs in DPs and BPs, with government institutions (and private service providers) accountable for delivering on public infrastructure and services, while POs and SMAs will hire private service providers for delivering private infrastructure and services.
- National Social Safeguards Supervision Consultant** is a full-time position that will work and report to the CASDP Project Director and Project Manager and she/he will work closely with all project teams, relevant government officials, the World Bank, private sectors and other relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs) partners. This position will be provided support to MAFF's Coordination Office and implementation unit to ensure effective application and implementation of the Cambodian government's policies related to social issues, and the World Bank's social safeguards policies. In particular, the assignment aims to ensure the successful implementation of the project's Social safeguards including Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) and Indigenous People Policies Framework (IPPF), as well as the environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). And this assignment is also to provide implementing agencies: MAFF, MRD, MOWRAM and MEF with hands-on supports for RPF implementation, monitoring, reporting and capacity building needs.
- The interested consultant will be evaluated based on the qualification and relevant experience in regard to the minimum criteria listed below:
 - At least a Bachelor's degree in social safeguard management, social science, or related fields;
 - Minimum 5-year experience regarding to the compliance of social safeguards policies including social safeguard risks management
 - Experience in moderating and facilitating group discussions in public preferred
 - Excellent written and oral communication skills in English and Khmer languages
 - Knowledge and experience of working with social safeguard policies of the World Bank and/or Asian Development Bank preferred.
- The individual consultants will base in Phnom Penh at CASDP office located at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries compound.
- The selection process will be carried out in accordance with provisions set forth in the Government Procurement Manual for Externally Financed Projects/Programs in Cambodia and Approved Selection Method for Individual Consultants-Section VII. *Approved Selection Methods: Consulting Services of the World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, dated July 2016, revised November 2017 and August 2018*.
- Interested candidates are requested to obtain detailed terms of reference (TOR) and send your expression of interest (EOI) by submitting the updated curriculum vitae and cover letter with at least three referees by email and attention to: Mr. Srey Sophan, (MAFF) Email: sophan.srey@gmail.com and Copy to: chetras@gmail.com, srmthour@gmail.com.
- Expression of Interest must be submitted no later than 13th October 2021 before 5:00pm (Local Time). Only Shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interview.
Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries,
Cambodia Agricultural Sector Diversification Project
Ground floor Department of International and Cooperation, MAFF
200 Corners of Mao Steung and Preah Norodom Blvd, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
Sincerely yours, 

Sar Chetra (Ph. D)
Deputy Secretary General of MAFF
Project Director of CASDP

ANNOUNCEMENT



UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet. Learn more at undp.org or follow at @UNDP.

Invitation to Bid	: Supply and Installation of solar water pumping (SWP) systems in Kampong Thom and Siem Reap Provinces, Cambodia
Deadline	: Extended to 11 October 2021 by 4:00 pm, Cambodia time.
Download Link	: https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=83257
Bid submission address	: https://etendering.partneragencies.org
Business Unit code	: KHM10 and Event ID: KHM50201
Consultancy	: National Consultant for Gender Responsive Budgeting and Institutionalization
Contract Type	: Individual Contractor (IC)
Duration	: 40 working days
Deadline	: Extended to 14 October 2021 (Midnight New York time)
Download Link	: https://jobs.undp.org/cj_view_job.cfm?cur_job_id=101836
Consultancy	: Video Production Consultants (Open for National and International with residence in Cambodia)
Contract Type	: Long Term Agreement (LTA) up to 3 LTAs
Duration	: Up to 240 days per year with a possibility of extension up to 03 years
Deadline	: 13 October 2021 (Midnight New York time)
Download Link	: https://jobs.undp.org/cj_view_job.cfm?cur_job_id=102272

UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.

All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks.

National

Teacher's Day celebration of digital revolution in education

Youn Dara

THE Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and other stakeholders will celebrate Teachers' Day on October 5 under the theme *Teachers Play an Important Role in Education in All Circumstances*.

The ministry said it is continuing to reform teachers' qualifications and considers a teacher's ability as key to evaluating student achievement.

In a press statement on September 27, it said the celebration this year will be held virtually and broadcast live on its official Facebook page.

"Teachers' Day is celebrated for the purpose of inspiring the culture and tradition of honouring teachers in schools across the country where they have been working as educators and as artists in transferring knowledge and as tributes to teachers who have retired or lost their lives," the ministry said.

Education minister Hang Chuon Naron is expected to make a speech on *Digital Revolution in Education and the Implementation of New Teaching Methods* at the event.

The celebration will be an occasion to award good principals, teachers, teachers of the Khmer language and



A teacher back in front of her class at Sisowath High School after schools reopened nationally in mid-September. HENG CHIVOAN

mathematics for grades 1 to 3 and Clean School Awards 2019-2020.

There will also be a forum under the theme "Reality, Potential and Excellence of Digital Education in Cambodia".

This year's Teachers' Day will also see an event titled *Teachers' Day October 5 Campaign Week*, which lasts for six days from September 29 to October 4. This event includes a discussion forum on teaching and learning history subjects based on a regulatory approach, debating on the topic of "Teaching for 21st century skills" for

the youth, among others.

Chuon Naron said on September 27 that over the past eight years, the ministry has launched a series of reform programmes to strengthen the quality and efficiency of education services, especially effective human resource training and specific skills to contribute to economic development in a new context, namely the digital economy.

"Based on the results of the high school diploma exam, the education ministry has conducted in-depth analysis and reflection, looking for

ways to improve the education system. Based on the results of this exam, we have seen the problems in the education sector. It is necessary to strengthen and improve teachers' qualifications, as well as to strengthen school management," he said.

He added that a teacher's ability was important, especially in specialised subjects, teaching methods and the evaluation of students' academic results. The ministry has prepared a reform focusing on five pillars – reform of teachers, incentives for teachers, salary increases, teacher qualifications, and improvement of teacher training programmes.

Ouk Chhayavy, president of the Cambodian Independent Teachers Association (CITA), said this year's Teachers' Day would not be the same as in the past due to the implementation of health measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19. But there will be a petition to demand more attention to teachers, especially retirees.

"For us, we only want teachers to have a decent living. On Teachers' Day, CITA always demands an increase in the basic salary of teachers to two million riel [\$500] to enable teachers to have proper living conditions when they are retired," she said. ■

B'Meanchey correlates Covid cases to pagodas

Mom Kunthea

AT LEAST 110 monks, nuns and laypeople from Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces have tested positive for Covid-19 since the start of the Pchum Ben festival.

In Battambang province, more than 60 people at several pagodas in four districts have tested positive, according to provincial Department of Cults and Religions director Kun Sambath Moniroth.

He told *The Post* on September 29 that the department had no plans to test all monks and pagoda residents across the province, but only monks at pagodas linked to or suspected of having contracted the coronavirus.

"Most of the more than 60 people who have tested positive are monks," he said, adding that the province has 385 pagodas with a total of 6,332 monks.

In Battambang town, which has 31 pagodas and more than 1,400 monks, health officials will continue to test monks and others in each pagoda. So far, health workers have collected samples from monks, nuns and laypeople at six pagodas for testing and found three positive cases at two of the six pagodas.

Sambath Moniroth continued that monks at some pagodas in Phnom Proek, Kamrieng and Bavel districts had also tested positive for Covid-19. Of the pagodas, Khnach Romeas in Bovel district had 58 monks

infected with Covid-19.

"Health officials will continue to collect samples from a number of monks in pagodas in Battambang town and other districts in case any pagoda is found to have monks or pagoda residents linked to or suspected of having Covid-19," he said.

He said health officials will monitor conditions along with the authorities to take samples from people at pagodas suspected of having Covid-19.

"We only spread the word and monitor the situation. The department did not lock down all pagodas and only closed those that had Covid-19 infections.

In Banteay Meanchey province, more than 50 monks have tested positive for Covid-19 and many pagodas including those in Sisophon town and Mongkol Borei, O'chrou, Phnom Srok, Preah Net Preah and Malai districts have been placed in lockdown.

In Siem Reap province, provincial administration spokesman Liv Sokhom said authorities had no plans to test pagoda residents, saying Siem Reap did not permit Pchum Ben festivities.

"We comply with the ministry's guidelines and give food to monks for a while. Not many people went to pagodas as many villages have been designated as red zones with no one allowed to leave their homes without permission," he said.

Religions ministry spokesman Seng Somony could not be reached for comment. ■

Prince Group chairman Neak Oknha Chen Zhi donates \$1 million to assist Lao Covid-19 fight

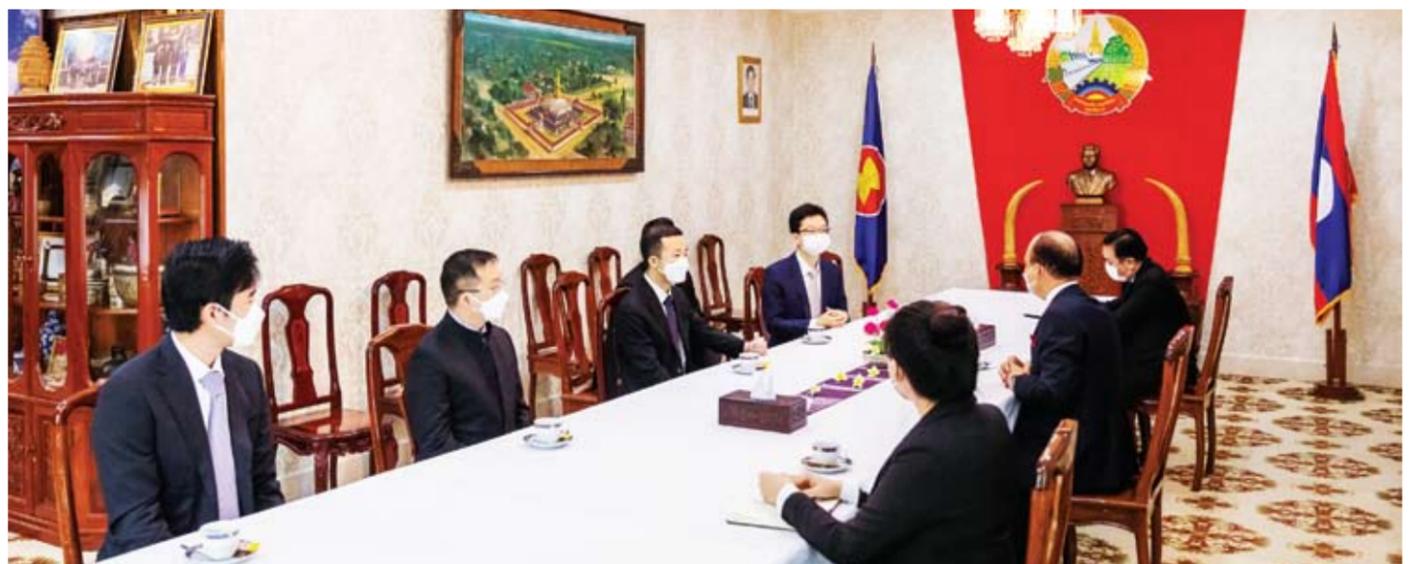
NEAK Oknha Chen Zhi, the chairman of Prince Holding Group – one of Cambodia's largest and fastest growing conglomerates – has donated \$1 million to the Lao government in response to calls from the Cambodian authorities to strengthen cooperation with Laos in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The driving force behind Cambodia's successful Prince Holding Group – which includes Prince Real Estate Group, Prince Bank, Prince Huan Yu, Belt Road Capital Management and Cambodia Airways, Chen Zhi is no stranger to the Kingdom's business landscape.

The Cambodian entrepreneur was also recognised as the "Entrepreneur of the Year – Conglomerates" at the 2021 International Business Awards, being the only entrepreneur honoured in a category that celebrates leaders running multi-industry businesses.

In addition, he is one of the three Asian business leaders recognised for their dynamic entrepreneurialism in different sectors during one of the most challenging years for corporate leadership.

In an era when leading corporates are fulfilling their social responsibilities, Neak Oknha Chen Zhi and his leadership team at Prince Group have been working tirelessly for the social good in Cambodia, and playing their part in helping the Kingdom overcome the pandemic. ■



Farming co-ops reap benefit

Long Kimmarita

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said 1,200 cooperative farming associations had been established and were contributing to the improvement in the livelihoods of farmers by helping them succeed in both the production and the business aspects of farming once their produce is ready to be brought to market.

Agriculture minister Veng Sakhon said on September 29 that from 2003 to 2021, a total of 1,200 farming co-ops had been established to support and assist the Cambodian agricultural sector.

He said the farmer's co-ops are made up of more than 140,000 farmers from 130,000 families. The farmers organised themselves into co-ops and then formalised the arrangements by registering with their provincial agriculture departments, whose records indicated that these co-ops all together had \$24.8 million for initial capitalisation.

"Currently, these farming co-ops have been playing an important role in actively contributing to the implementation of agricultural development policies and plans.

"They have embraced the government's policies on boosting rice production and increasing rice exports, horticultural production, productivity enhancement, agricultural diversification and agricultural

trade—all with the primary objectives of ensuring food security, supporting their families and driving the development of the rural economy," he said.

He said the ministry would continue to support and encourage farming co-ops throughout the country because they can provide farmers with benefits like shared resources and knowledge, mutual support, efficiencies of scale and improved leverage in business negotiations.

Chea Saing Dona, director of the ministry's community development department, told *The Post* on September 29 that the increase in the number of these farming co-ops was due to the fact that when the farmers came together to form these organisations, they found that it brought many benefits and was a stabilising force in the domestic market for their crops.

"In view of the current difficulties faced by farmers in many aspects of their work, we encourage them to form farming co-ops. The establishment of these associations are voluntary and up to the choice of each farmer—but our ministry believes in the potential benefits they bring—so we have provided technical support and helped coordinate the legal registration process," he said.

When farmers organise into co-ops, it is often to realise some particular benefit like increased negotiating power

when selling their produce at market, he said.

However, he explained, they soon discover that it also helps them by allowing them to order raw materials and farming supplies at bulk prices and by giving them an expanded network of business contacts with new opportunities and even access to new markets for their produce.

He said the farmers who are co-op members are typically earning a higher income than others and expanding their businesses faster in comparison to those who were still trying to do everything on their own.

Chheng Thong, chairman of the board of the Sambo Meanchey Agricultural Co-operative in Kampong Cham province—one of the most successful co-ops supplying Cambodia's vegetable and fruit markets—said their organisation's growth had been motivated by the support and encouragement of the agriculture ministry, which provided helpful advice on things like planning, management and marketing.

"The formation of production teams and the preparation of production contracts is another benefit of pooling both our physical and mental resources. Our community's success has motivated us to expand our agricultural production potential by buying another 10ha of land to bring under cultivation to meet market demands," he said. ■



A pilot training at Lanmei Training Centre in September. LTC

Kingdom's Air Force set to boost aviation sector

Nov Sivutha

THE Lanmei Training Centre (LTC)—in collaboration with the Royal Cambodian Air Force—has launched its first flight from a Cambodian air force base.

Kong Mony, the Air Force's chief of staff and deputy commander, said at the launch ceremony on September 29 that the flight was part of a long-term strategic plan for the training of Cambodian human resources in the field of aviation as well as technical repair and aircraft control in Cambodia.

"This contributes to building human resources—especially pilots—in the Cambodian aviation sector to achieve the same relative quantity and quality as other countries in the region and beyond," he said.

Chan Chee Seng, chairman of the board of LTC, also said

the opening of the Pilot Human Resource Training Centre was in response to the lack of Cambodian human resources in this field, which can hold back progress for Cambodian civil aviation.

He said the centre is there to serve Cambodian students so that they do not have to study abroad, which is extremely expensive. Instead, they can study locally to meet the needs of the aviation sector. Cambodia now has a shortage of pilots and engineers and those who do work here are mostly foreigners.

"The centre was set up to train Cambodians to become pilots, to help Cambodian pluralism and also to replace foreign workers in the future to meet the needs of local aviation using Cambodian pilots," he said.

Khan Vanna, director-general for technical operations at the

State Secretariat of Civil Aviation (SSCA), said LTC and CAF will have a specific programme to develop a strategic plan for training aviation human resources in Cambodia to a greater extent than most other developing countries in the world.

He said the programme of cooperation between LTC and CAF would not be limited to pilot training but would also expand into aircraft engineering, inspections and maintenance services—all jobs currently occupied mostly by foreign workers who need to be paid more and are often in Cambodia on a relatively short-term basis.

"Therefore, the programme is a strong priority because skilled human resources are really the key factor that is missing in Cambodian aviation right now so we're working to be able to meet those needs in the future," he said. ■

Drug body's training focus shifts to administrative work

Nov Sivutha

THE Royal School of Administration (RCA) and the National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD) held a training course on September 28 on "capacity building of public unit management" for 112 civil servants from the NACD and relevant state institutions.

RCA director Youk Bunna, who is also permanent secretary of state for the Ministry of Civil Service, told *The Post* on September 29 that the training was conducted under the auspices of the July 29 memorandum of understanding (MoU) between RCA and NACD outlining plans to build human resources capacities for both institutions.

He said that in previous years a small number of officials from NACD would come to RCA directly for training, but this year they had expanded the programme and brought in

a larger group of 112 officials.

He said the training was focused entirely on administrative and management issues rather than attempting to cross-train on law enforcement or drugs-related topics that the officials frequently address elsewhere.

He added that within the framework of this MoU, the two institutions will continue to organise such training courses in the future and will also exchange trainers to expand training to target officials who needed to improve their capacity.

"Focused training is more effective than general training so we provide it to suit their needs in the framework of operations as well as in their duties as the leadership of their units. In addition, we train officials in charge of high-efficiency work because we already have experience doing that effectively with other institutions," he said.

Sreang Phanith, director of the RCA's training department, said in her remarks at the opening day of the training course on September 28 that the RCA had organised this training programme into four modules.

Module A touches on things from the perspective of the unit's director. Module B focuses on administrative and communication skills. Module C covers unit personnel management and budget management, while Module D discusses case studies and social work. All together, the four modules added up to 156 hours of classroom time.

He said it was expected that at the end of the training, all 112 civil servants will be able to manage, lead and plan effectively by delegating specific assignments to their subordinates that are accompanied by clearly stated and realistic work goals. ■

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ABA NATIONAL BANK OF CANADA GROUP

TRADING INFORMATION ON CAMBODIA SECURITIES EXCHANGE

Date: September 30, 2021

Auction Trading Method (ATM)

NO	STOCK	CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW
1	ABC	11,040	10,960	11,280	10,960
2	GTI	4,460	4,440	4,460	4,380
3	PAS	13,600	13,720	13,720	13,440
4	PEPC	3,170	3,160	3,170	3,130
5	PPAP	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
6	PPSP	2,060	2,050	2,070	2,040
7	PWSA	7,020	7,060	7,060	7,000



Kampot Int'l Tourism Port by end-2021

Hin Pisei

KAMPOT International Tourism Port – slated to be completed by end-2021 – will become an international maritime gateway, a vital component in the national transportation system, and an important magnet for national and international tourists, according to Minister of Tourism Thong Khon.

The minister made the remark on September 29 during an inspection of the quay, in the company of provincial governor Cheav Tay, as reported by the Ministry of Tourism later that day.

Khon said the quay will “link tourist transportation to the southern islands and connect Kampot province the world” and undergird tourism development in the Bokor Mountain region and other nearby areas, especially along the Kingdom’s coastline.

Breaking ground on August 8, 2018, the quay is built to international standards and

will handle one million passengers – presumably annually, the ministry said, noting that construction was about 84 per cent complete and on track to be finished by December 31.

Located on 4ha in Teuk Chhou district about 6km west of Kampot town, the project is financed by an \$8 million loan from the Asian Development Bank, and will have a water depth of 4.5m.

Kampot provincial Department of Tourism director Soy Sinol told *The Post* on September 30 that the quay would inject a new dose of vitality into the Kampot market and lure in travellers from neighbouring countries to the province’s wide-ranging selection of beaches, mountains, natural attractions and other tourist destinations.

The project will improve access to more options for holidaymakers, especially after the world is able to control Covid-19, he said, adding that international tourists will be able enter Cambodia through



Kampot International Tourism Port, as seen on Wednesday with construction about 84 per cent complete. TOURISM MINISTRY

the quay and travel to various recreational tourist spots across the country.

“We are eagerly awaiting to receive tourists through the port,” he said, adding that the project is the first of its kind for the province, predicting that the quay would catch the eye of more investors.

World Express Co Ltd managing director Ho Vandy echoed

Sinol’s enthusiasm, hoping for a meaningful uptick in holidaymakers to the Kingdom from neighbouring countries.

He said the creation of docks and entertainment venues would make Kampot more attractive to travellers and investment in all sectors.

“This is a form of tourism diversification achieved through waterway transport, which al-

lows visitors to try new experiences, as opposed to air and land travel,” he said.

In addition to Kampot International Tourism Port, the minister also attended inauguration ceremonies for smaller infrastructure developments in the Phnom Kampong Trach area in Kampot – known for its caves, as well as the Peam Krasop Tour-

ism Community in Koh Kong province and the Wat Phnom Sar Sear Community in Kep province.

From January-July, Cambodia received 112,544 international visitors, marking a steep decline of 90.6 per cent year-on-year, the tourism ministry reported, noting that only two entered the country by waterways. ■

Cambodia, Thailand agree to open new border point

Thou Vireak

CAMBODIA and Thailand have agreed to open a new border crossing soon, linking Stung Bot village in Poipet town with Ban Nong Ian village of the Thai province of Sa Kaeo, in the hopes of encouraging cross-border trade.

Thai Minister of Commerce Jurin Laksanawisit on September 29 confirmed that Thailand had agreed to open the crossing ahead of schedule, even though construction on its checkpoint remains unfinished, local media *The Nation Thailand* reported.

He said, however, that the border gate would be open exclusively for container trade for the time being.

Cambodian Ministry of Public Works and Transport spokesman Vasim Sorya told *The Post* on September 30 that the move came at the request of the ministry in June, in

coordination with the provincial governors of Banteay Meanchey and Thailand’s Sa Kaeo.

The ministry has been preparing the infrastructure, including roads, car parks, offices and checkpoints for the crossing. The opening will allow container lorries an alternative to the Poipet International Border Checkpoint to enter Thailand, with inspection conducted by the Cambodian side.

“We have already set up the Stung Bot immigration office. As for the customs department, we will bring officials from the Poipet border because we’ve already set up the scanning devices at Stung Bot Square,” Sorya said.

He said he did not know about the timeframe for the restricted opening, hinting at Covid-related delays and adding that the Thai side is also preparing for the new set of officials of the incoming Sa Kaeo provincial admin-

istration to formally take office.

“But we are ready for the limited opening.”

He said the initiative aims to facilitate the transit of goods across the border in both directions and to relieve congestion at the Poipet border.

“We want to open the new international border checkpoint to meet broader standards based on the principles of the ASEAN Community, the Greater Mekong Subregion.

“Of note, Cambodia and Thailand have agreed to this, to smooth the cross-border flow of goods and logistics management, and thereby lower shipping costs. We’ve also settled on a one-stop inspection system,” Sorya said.

According to the Minister of Public Works and Transport Sun Chanthol, the construction of the buildings at Stung Bot-Ban Nong Ian International Border Checkpoint will cost

\$26.85 million, financed by a loan from the Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (Neda), Thailand’s international development aid agency.

Cambodia Logistics Association (CLA) president Sin Chanthy welcomed the decision, chalking it up as a win for the transport and logistics sectors of both kingdoms.

“Once the checkpoint is opened, the transportation of goods at the Poipet border checkpoint will be an easier undertaking, in contrast with its historical patterns of congestion.

“At the Poipet checkpoint, both passengers and goods pass through the same road, which creates bottlenecks. Now that the Stung Bot-Ban Nong Ian checkpoint will be open at limited capacity, we’ll see better, faster transportation and shipping connections, which will save us more time,” Chanthy said.

The checkpoint is in Phsar Kandal commune’s Stung Bot village on the Cambodian side, and in Tha Kham sub-district’s Ban Nong Ian village of Sa Kaeo’s Aranyaprathet district at the terminus of Highway 3366 on the Thai side (GPS Coordinates: 13.616N, 102.61E).

Trade volume between Cambodia and Thailand reached \$7.236 billion in 2020, down by 23.17 per cent from 2019, due to Covid-related disruptions, according to the Thai Ministry of Commerce.

Statistics show that Cambodia exported \$1.148 billion worth of goods to Thailand in 2020, down by 49.49 per cent from the previous year, and imported \$6.089 billion, down by 14.80 per cent from 2019.

These numbers imply that the Cambodia’s trade deficit with Thailand widened 8.9 per cent over the year, from \$4.54 billion to \$4.94 billion. ■

Kingdom pushes for return of oil, ship, crew

Continued from page 1

“The Royal Government of Cambodia is seeking to bring to justice those charged with having committed serious criminal offences, now that the Indonesian proceedings have been completed.

“The right to a fair trial and due process is ensured for anyone extradited to Cambodia to face prosecution for breaches of Cambodian laws, as in this case,” it said.

Addressing the ownership of the crude oil, the ministry said it “needs to correct various assertions and statements made in the press on behalf of the owners and managers of *MT Strovolos*”.

“The true position is that the crude oil has at all relevant times been the property of the Kingdom of Cambodia,” it said. “The ownership of the crude oil and the violation of Cambodian laws were clearly notified to, among others, the owners and managers and crew of *MT Strovolos* some months ago.

“However, they have not taken any action to return the crude oil to the Kingdom of Cambodia, and instead *MT Strovolos* called at various ports in Thailand and Indonesia, and again switched off her AIS [automatic identification system] along her passage for considerable periods at various stages.



Singapore's KrisEnergy on December 29 extracted the first drop of crude oil from Cambodian waters. MINISTRY OF MINES AND ENERGY

“[These include] when – leaving Cambodian waters without permission or authority with the crude oil belonging to the Kingdom of Cambodia; leaving Thai waters; and entering Indonesian waters,” it added.

According to a lawyer based in Cambodia, in order to lawfully depart from the Kingdom, a vessel carrying crude oil must also comply with customs and immigration laws and procedures. As far as he understands, *MT Strovolos* had left Cambodia at around midnight without complying with

these procedures. This is also a criminal act which is punishable pursuant to Cambodian laws, he said.

He added that as a matter of law, and in line with the basic principle of justice, prosecuting criminals is also “an act of protecting the human rights of the victim”. In this case, the Royal Government of Cambodia could be considered as victim of theft or misappropriation of its property.

Back then, the ministry explained, the vessel “left Cambodian waters illegally, she was on charter to a

KrisEnergy company that had a contract to develop Cambodian oil reserves”.

“It appears that there were disputes under the charter between the owners and managers of the vessel and KrisEnergy. Whatever the position was and is, this has nothing to do with the Royal Government of Cambodia.

“The crude oil cannot be the subject of any claim by the owners and managers of *MT Strovolos* as the crude oil does not belong to the charterer [KrisEnergy].

“As has been emphasised,

the crude oil is the property of the Kingdom of Cambodia. In any event, no claim under the charter agreement justifies or permits the unlawful departure of *MT Strovolos* from Cambodian waters and/or the misappropriation of the crude oil,” it underlined.

The ministry affirmed that the arrests were made after an Interpol red corner notice was issued against the crew at Cambodia's request. The Indonesian Navy said they picked up the tanker and detained the crew on July 27, three days after the notice was posted.

The ministry said the government, “exercising its rights and duties under international and domestic Cambodian laws, requested via Interpol and in direct contact with the Indonesian authorities that the crew be arrested and extradited to the Kingdom of Cambodia, in accordance with the procedures set out in the ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and relevant laws on Cambodia”.

It also pointed out that WTM's supposed concern over the crew's welfare, as indicated in various press statements, appears “to be at odds with the fact that the crew have failed to respect the safety of life at sea”.

This is evident “as they had the vessel's AIS deactivated during various periods and because the crew had *MT Stro-*

volos leave Cambodian waters without authority or permission with the crude oil belonging to the Kingdom of Cambodia”, it said.

“Further, they would by now, in any event, have organised the prompt restoration of the crude oil to its rightful owner, the Kingdom of Cambodia, and would desist from their attempts to extract money from the Kingdom of Cambodia for matters that relate to disputes they may have with KrisEnergy.

“We are grateful for the cooperation we have received from the Indonesian authorities so far and greatly appreciate their assistance. It reflects the continued strengthening of the relationship between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Indonesia and of the ASEAN community,” the ministry said.

Ministry director-general for Petroleum Cheap Sour affirmed on September 30 that the government had submitted all the necessary documents to its Indonesian counterpart concerning its request for the return of all crew members, the vessel and crude oil.

He told *The Post*: “Now, we are carefully monitoring the proceedings of both our Indonesian counterparts and Interpol on what we have requested. We will do our best to respond to all requests from the Indonesian authorities.” ■

Metfone launches 'Pchum Ben Gifts for Everyone' campaign

CAMBODIA'S leading mobile operator Metfone on Thursday kicked off a special Pchum Ben celebration plan with a difference – special gifts for Metfone customers every time they scan the QR code and make a donation to the Kantha Bopha Hospital.

During the festival campaign – from September 30 to October 31 – Metfone and eMoney subscribers are each given one scan free in the CamID/eMoney app (eMoney subscribers will be given one free scan in eMoney and one free scan in CamID).

For every top-up of at least 5,000 riel (around \$1.25) via scratch card or digital top-up (eMoney, e-wallet or bank account), subscribers will be given one free scan. In addition, one free scan will be given to new subscribers who register an eMoney account and have the first transaction charged with a fee.

Special prizes include a one damlung (37.4g) gold necklace, iPhone 12 pro, laptops, iPads and Apple watches. Metfone subscribers will also stand the chance to win prizes in the form of PIN code cards for mobile phones as well as data for internet usage worth thousands of dollars.

Most importantly, the prizes are 100 per cent guaranteed every time a customer scans the QR code.

Subscribers who win the prizes by scanning the QR code are entitled to share the CamID/eMoney prizes to

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*រាល់ពេលលោកអ្នកស្តុកម្តង មិត្តហ្វូនស៊ីបរិច្ឆេទ 5 សេន ជូនដល់មូលនិធិមន្ទីរពេទ្យកន្ទាបបុព្វ

friends or family members as Pchum Ben gifts to celebrate the festival. Other terms and conditions will be applied to the “Pchum Ben Gifts for Everyone” programme.

Business associated with social responsibility In addition to this gift pro-

gramme, Metfone will also donate funds raised from the scanned QR transactions – five cents per scan – to the Kantha Bopha Hospital during the Pchum Ben Gifts programme.

Metfone, which has been operating in Cambodia for more than a

decade, has emerged as a leading mobile network operator with the most extensive coverage across the Kingdom.

Metfone conducts its business with a high sense of social responsibility, striving to give back to the society in which it operates. Several

corporate social responsibility activities have been implemented such as the humanity charity programme called “It's Not a Dream”; the Metfone Cambodian Leagues providing internet to schools; donations to the Cambodian Red Cross; and providing funds to tackle Covid-19. ■

SPECIAL REPORT

A new tax regulation risks cutting the power on e-commerce activity

In Cambodia's move to raise tax revenue, resident and non-resident digital businesses must register and pay tax. While it may put off some players, others might be unwittingly caught by the obscurity of the declaration

Sangeetha Amarthalingam

LESS than six months after introducing a sub-decree to push non-resident e-commerce firms to register for value-added tax (VAT) with the Cambodian tax authority, the government has upped the ante.

The two new e-commerce policies – a November 30, 2021 deadline for the companies to register with the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and a reverse charge VAT mechanism relating to business-to-business (B2B) transactions – signal the government's seriousness in tightening tax measures.

For both policies, the penalties for failing to comply are severe, involving the termination of service and fines, demonstrating the authority's frustration in trying to get the companies to obey the law.

A statement issued by MoC last week revealed how foreign companies or branches, sole proprietors and businesses that operate e-commerce platforms in Cambodia had yet to apply for e-commerce permit or license despite numerous workshops and training.

Going by the terse tone of the statement, these platforms are likely to see an end to their operation starting December 1 this year, said Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications secretary of state So Visothy.

"The firms who provide e-commerce business activities in Cambodia have to comply with the law and regulation. If they fail to comply or do not pay tax to the government, it is illegal for them to operate in Cambodia.

"[They] are subject to legal action by MoC or Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF). We have the right to cooperate with the authorities to close down the illegal business operation," he told *The Post* via a social messaging app.

The growth of the e-commerce market has been exponential reflecting the Kingdom's economic growth and lower middle income status.

In addition, the number of e-commerce players, both big and small,



E-commerce sales in Cambodia have grown exponentially, thanks to digital businesses on social media platforms. HONG MENEA

have mushroomed in the past one year, with many taking to social media platforms to solicit for business and promote service.

This year, the World Bank forecasts gross domestic product per capita to be \$1,606, rising 2.6 per cent after dipping last year. With that, disposable income has expanded to 464,000 riel (\$113) in 2017, according to market and consumer data research firm Statista Inc.

If anything, the pandemic has only boosted the usefulness of digital business, prompted by the shift in consumer behaviour.

Data by Statista showed that e-commerce market in Cambodia is valued around \$1.5 billion with sales expected to reach \$251 million this year. Fashion retail was the largest segment, followed by electronics and media, and food and personal care. By 2025, sales is forecast to be \$354 million.

However, it is not clear how the figure is calculated as the MoC does not have a database on e-commerce businesses, although it expects to set one up after December 1, assuming businesses comply with its deadline.

In fact, Penn Sovicheat, undersec-

retary of MoC, opined that the gross merchandise value in Cambodia is anyone's guess, seeing that there are "tens of thousands" of e-commerce operators in Cambodia.

"You just have to look online, on Facebook, and you can tell that there should be tens of thousands operating on social media platforms and other marketplaces," he said.

While some muscle-flexing is expected after December 1 to get the operators to cooperate, the two-prong strategy by MoC and MEF to register companies and for VAT, respectively, might hit a snag, given its uphill task of trying to apply 100 per cent control over the situation.

The government might also not go in strong "in the beginning", particularly on Cambodian operators, as it feels obliged to weigh the social and economic well-being of local operators under current circumstances.

"On one hand, we have to take action because the state needs money to help the economy but on the other, we need to be compassionate because people's livelihoods are affected," Sovicheat said.

Since MoC's initial announcement in May this year calling both resident and non-resident e-commerce operators to register, the ministry has only received enquiries, including request for advice over their eligibility.

"Many are not sure if they need to register or apply for a permit. These are the type of queries we are getting. But I can't say how many have become legal operations or are paying tax. Our job is to register the operators while GDT will collect the tax," Sovicheat said, likening MoC as the upstream enabler while MEF handles downstream activities.

He noted that small operators who make less than 250 million riel (\$62,500) revenue per annum are exempted from the registration. The exemption also extends to six other areas, including seasonal agriculture or temporary family-owned

businesses, online private tutoring, and booking services.

The government has made appeals through the international chambers of commerce in Cambodia to inform foreign e-commerce firms in the respective countries to register for VAT or risk being penalised.

Clarity and confusion

The issue of non-resident e-commerce operators, with MEF's Sub-decree 65 in April and the recent Prakas 542 relating to the registration of VAT with the General Department of Taxation (GDT), might be coming to a head.

When it first came out, the sub-decree, provided for in the Law on Taxation, raised eyebrows given its broad definition of non-resident digital goods and service providers and its ambition to get the operators, global tech giants and smaller ones, to register for VAT.

The four categories consist of online purchases of tangible and intangible goods, software licensing and related services, online auctions or online services, and advertising or streaming, as described by legal, tax and investment firm DFDL Cambodia.

Some of the activities comprise purchasing, selling, leasing, or exchanging products or services including electronic commercial and civil commercial activities.

Common activities, like software upgrades and maintenance, digital product downloads, website hosting, advertising, online shopping and streamed web-based broadcasting on a real-time basis are also part of the pool that is subjected to VAT.

This segment could mean that tech giants like Netflix, Spotify, Microsoft, Taobao, and Google are expected to adhere to this regulation, given their massive exposure.

A few tech giants covering the Southeast Asian market, who were contacted, did not respond to questions.

Cambodia is not alone in its pur-

suit, seeing that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and G20 countries have been working progressively to combat base erosion and profit shifting, wrote legal, tax and investment firm DFDL Cambodia on its website.

It is among Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam that have drafted rules relating to e-commerce sales to Cambodian consumers by non-resident entities which are in accordance with OECD recommendations, it said.

So, going after multinational tech operators makes sense, especially when countries like Canada and France implemented tax laws to pressure them to pay a levy on the billions they make on its citizens.

However, clarity on the regulations is lacking, particularly on Prakas 542 which highlights a new feature, that is the VAT reverse charge mechanism for business-to-business (B2B) transactions.

Lack of clarity was previously observed in sub-decree 65 but was later resolved by Prakas 542. However, this prakas requires elaboration now, particularly in relation to a 30-day VAT registration deadline.

Why? Because of the determination in the document, which states that non-resident firms that fail to register by the deadline, presumably early October based on its prakas dated September 8, would be "unilaterally registered" by GDT.

The tax department would also issue a tax re-assessment of the taxes that they believe have not been paid – along with penalties and interest, said DFDL Cambodia partner and deputy managing director Clint O'Connell.

Questions to GDT director-general Kong Vibol were not answered.

Meanwhile, O'Connell said the new mechanism would need a degree of added compliance not experienced by Cambodian registered taxpayers that transact with non-resident e-commerce providers.

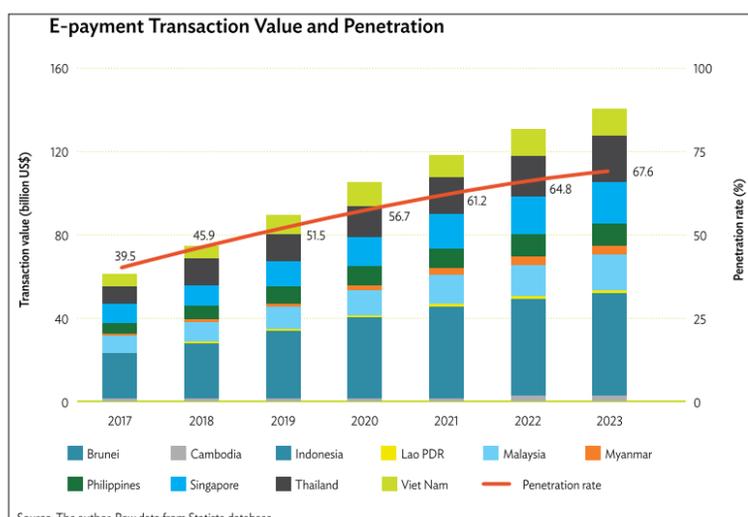
To be sure, this policy subjects non-resident taxpayers who supply digital goods or services or e-commerce activities with an annual turnover of 250 million or more, or expect a turnover of 60 million (\$15,000) in three consecutive months in a calendar year to register for VAT.

These criteria bear similarities with the corporate tax threshold which could lead to confusion among taxpayers.

Reverse charge mechanism

The way the policy works in a B2B transaction is that the VAT registered non-resident e-commerce supplier would have to disclose the transactions in its monthly declaration to the GDT, although they would not have to pay tax.

The Cambodian taxpayer, who purchases the online goods or service, would have to account for the



Source: E-Commerce Connectivity in ASEAN (ERIA, April 2020)

10 per cent VAT of the supplier regardless of whether the supplier has registered for VAT or not.

Under the reverse charge mechanism, the Cambodian taxpayer needs to make that application with GDT no later than the 20th of the following month of which the supply was made.

"The registered taxpayer who pays the VAT to the GDT on behalf of the non-resident under the reverse charge mechanism can claim a VAT input credit, even if the non-resident is not registered for VAT in Cambodia," O'Connell said in a webinar on this topic on September 29.

Slightly different in business to customer transactions, the registered taxpayer would issue the invoice with VAT to the customer. The registered taxpayer would calculate the VAT payable, make the payment and submit a VAT declaration before the 20th of the following month.

Based on the online transactions, that would probably be a large amount of tax that would be collected with respect to these services.

As it stands, VAT collection is among the larger components in Cambodia's tax revenue that sees year-on-year growth.

Looking at the three-month revenue threshold set by the GDT, the bigger e-commerce players would likely fall under the criteria, making it compulsory for them to register for VAT.

'Unwitting consumer'

Though the ability of the tax department to unilaterally register taxpayers has been in existence even for normal taxpayers, it has not been rigidly implemented.

So, going forward, are these legislations just a threat for e-commerce operators to conform? In an analysis on Prakas 542, O'Connell wrote that it would be "interesting to see in the

coming months how many of the large players in the e-commerce sector feel compelled to register for VAT in Cambodia under this new development".

"Concerns still linger with respect to the interplay of the VAT registration requirement under Prakas 542 and the expansive definition of permanent establishment (PE) under Cambodia's Tax on Income regulations which provide that a non-resident taxpayer who carries out e-commerce activities is considered to have a created a PE if the goods or services are supplied or used in Cambodia.

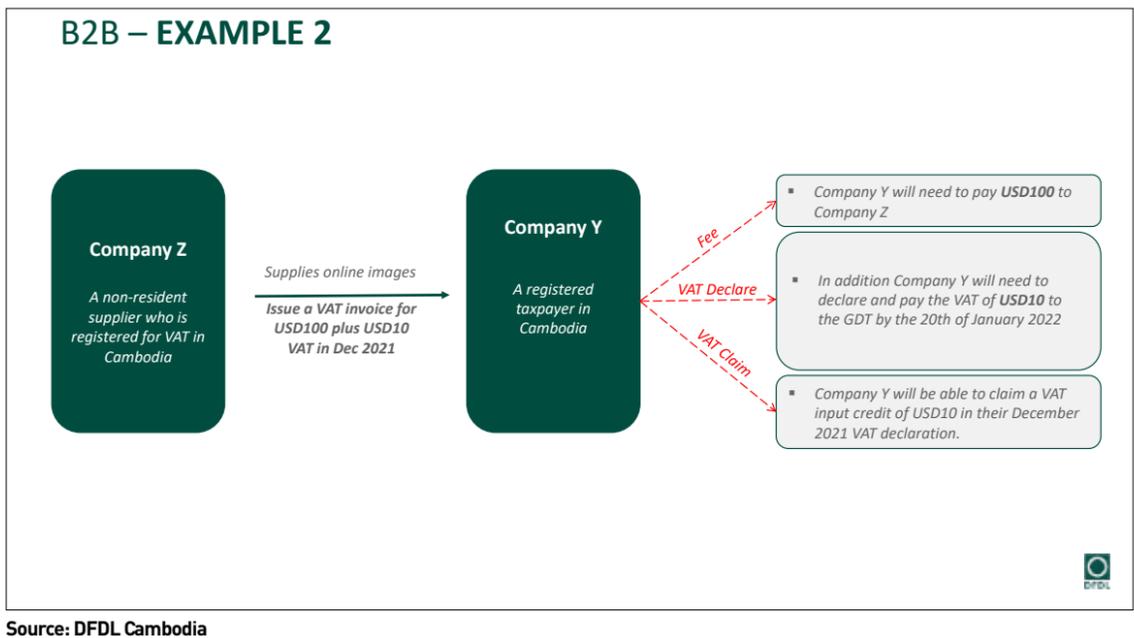
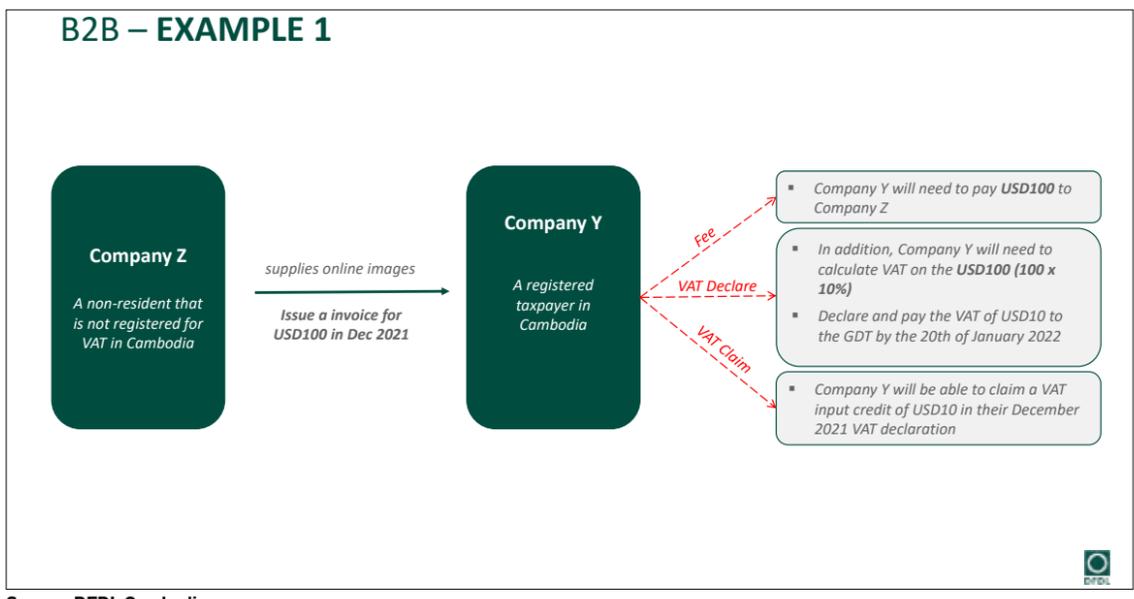
"By specifically stating that VAT registration is required for non-resident e-suppliers who do not have a PE in Cambodia, the new e-commerce regulations appear to have knocked back the wide expanse of the PE definition.

"If the tax authority wishes to encourage compliance and VAT registration by the large e-commerce players we suggest that it should clarify this issue which could be seen as a deal breaker for some when it comes to the registration obligation," he said.

O'Connell also pointed out that the additional compliance obligation that was now placed on registered taxpayers, might be the "unwitting consumer" of an e-commerce activity that would be captured under the expansion list of e-commerce activities in sub-decree 65.

"Failure of a registered taxpayer to pay the VAT reverse charge from September 2021 is going to result in re-assessed tax, penalties and interest and the potential to be unable to obtain a corresponding VAT input credit.

"The stakes are quite high and it will be incumbent for tax advisors and internal finance teams alike to educate themselves on the types of transactions that will create a VAT reverse charge obligation for their clients and businesses respectively," he stressed.



ភ្នំពេញ ថ្ងៃទី The Phnom Penh Post

Pchum Ben Festival

Post Media will not publish during the Pchum Ben holidays from October 4-8. We will resume publication on Monday, October 11.

Post Media management and staff wish all our readers, advertisers and business partners good health, prosperity and happiness. Please have a safe journey to and from your homeland during the celebrations.



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PHNOM PENH TRAIN STATION



Royal Train Square is the newly opened arts, culture and F&B hub in the centre of Phnom Penh.

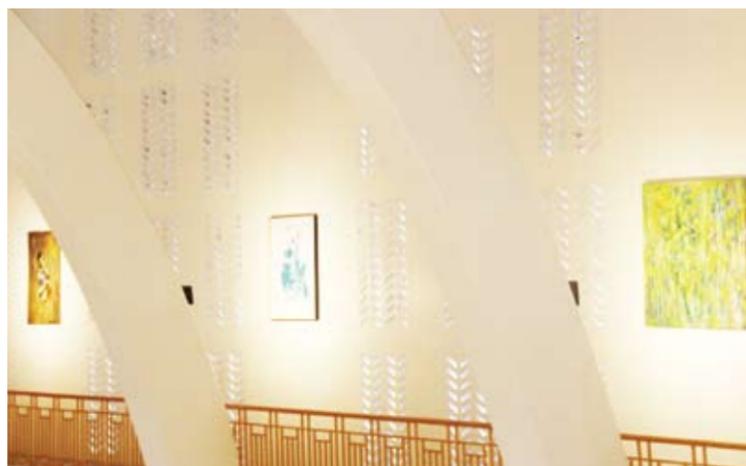


The capital's historic railway station has been beautifully restored.

PHOTOS JOE CURTIN

Krama NFT Marketplace at Royal Train Square set to revolutionise arts scene

In the third of our four-part series on the redevelopment of Phnom Penh Train Station, *The Post* looks at the newly opened Royal Train Square becoming home to the Kingdom's first ever NFT marketplace.



Krama NFT Marketplace is to showcase 100s of pieces of art, music and photography.



The Royal Train Square garden features food, refreshment, art and live music every Friday night.



BASED out of Royal Train Square – Phnom Penh's newly opened arts, culture and F&B hub – the Kingdom's first marketplace for NFTs – non-fungible tokens – is set to revolutionise the Cambodian arts scene.

Krama NFT Marketplace at Royal Train Square is to provide a highly sought-after service in line with the explosion of NFTs and Cambodia's art renaissance, as the historic building witnesses the continued growth of a very 21st century phenomenon.

"It is great honour to be involved in returning the Phnom Penh Train Station back to its former glory, and to witness the 'grand old lady' returning to her rightful position at the centre of the capital as a place where people can meet, dine and relax in beautiful surroundings.

"With the iconic building set to celebrate its 90th anniversary next year, it is particularly apt for Royal Train Square to be the base for Krama NFT Marketplace as Cambodia embraces the latest blockchain

technology, just as it was the centre for the Kingdom's new railway system back in 1932," said Scott Bolls, the managing director of Royal Train Square.

An NFT marketplace is a dedicated platform for storing and trading NFTs, and items can have a fixed price or be bought at auction.

And the creation of Krama NFT Marketplace comes with sales of value token-based artwork increasing dramatically, while physical art declines with galleries closed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

In April, for example, *Everydays: the First 5000 Days* by Beeple – a digital artwork in JPEG form – was sold by Christie's auction house for \$69.3 million.

Jesse McCaul, Krama's communications director, said the Kingdom's first NFT marketplace reflects the global move towards digitalisation and will be of huge benefit to Cambodia's artists – both creatively and financially.

"The physical assets in the world amount to trillions of dollars, and they are gradually being transferred into digital formats, with NFTs just one avenue of this larger transition.

"Providing additional chances to discover, buy and sell, and create 100s of NFTs based on and promoting

Cambodian culture, Krama NFT Marketplace represents a historic opportunity for the Kingdom's artists to secure and independently verify their works, both old and new.

"NFTs also bring further avenues for experimentation with new forms of enhancing their work with the use of animation, AR and VR, while creating additional revenue streams and even allowing artists to collect ongoing royalties from all future sales of their creations," McCaul said.

Krama NFT Marketplace is registered in Singapore – the world's No1 regulator of blockchain digital asset creation – and will have international sales operations in Hong Kong and London to further promote the Kingdom's unique culture and artists to mature

and affluent markets, he added.

With a physical gallery at Royal Train Square in the heart of the capital, the newly formed company is set to showcase 100s of pieces of art, music and photography, as well as special gift NFTs.

Krama NFT Marketplace will also host monthly online and physical auctions at the iconic Art Deco railway station, as well a range of art and cultural events.

"An initial stock of digital art related to our physical artworks will be immediately available, while future projects include Full Steam Ahead.

"Full Steam Ahead – a collaboration between the Cambodian Children's Fund, Krama, Royal Train Square and Field of Dreams – is a series of live painting events highlighting the importance of including art in STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] education.

"An educational project running for 15 months in the lead-up to the station's 90th anniversary next year, Full Steam Ahead will provide an ongoing

inventory with 90 pieces of physical artwork being offered as packages of NFTs aligned with either the original or limited edition prints," McCaul said.

The pieces are to be created at the Royal Train Square garden, which every Friday night features food, refreshment, art and live music, the Oregon native added.

NFTs have also been given royal approval, with Cambodia's HRH Prince Norodom Narithipong in August buying BOAX NFT Marketplace's NFT artwork *Olympic Happiness* by internationally renowned artist Dr Man-Kit Lam Dominic.

"The very rapid development of the NFT market is one of the biggest events in the financial technology space. I am a strong believer in fintech and its capacity in changing everyone's financial life.

"It's an honour for me to own this first Olympic NFT at this special time, not only to show my belief in the Olympic spirit, but also to show our commitment in facilitating the development of the fintech industry in Cambodia," Prince Narithiporn said after the auction. ■

For enquiries, email: contact@kramanftmarketplace.com. Please visit the kramanftmarketplace.com website or the Royal Train Square Facebook page.



Scott Bolls, the managing director of Royal Train Square.

World

US, EU pledge joint action on tech, trade, semiconductors

US AND EU officials on September 29 pledged to join forces to deal with a host of technology and trade issues to secure semiconductor supplies.

The inaugural meeting of the Trade and Technology Council (TTC) laid out a lengthy to-do list, but perhaps the most significant achievement was the symbolic restoration of good relations after the damage suffered under the administration of former president Donald Trump.

"It's just a remarkable spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and a desire between the United States and European Union to work very, very closely together," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters.

But the summit also set its sights on forced labour, artificial intelligence, digital privacy and protecting human rights activists online, as well as monitoring foreign investment in key sectors and controlling exports of sensitive products.

The high-level meetings were held as industries worldwide grapple with shortages of crucial semiconductors that are harming manufacturing, including of autos, and pushing prices higher.

The TTC was born out of US President Joe Biden's summit in Brussels in June, when he attempted to repair relations battered by Trump's aggressive actions against trade rivals and allies alike, as well as more recent missteps that have riled Brussels.

The biggest thorn in the relationship are the Trump-era tariffs on steel and aluminium shipped from Europe, which the Biden administration has suspended but not withdrawn.

That dispute loomed over the tech meeting but was not on the agenda, although officials have said recently that they are nearing a permanent solution.

The ministers met at a massive World War II-era munitions factory and later



US Trade Representative Katherine Tai (left), Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo (second left), and Secretary of State Antony Blinken (third left) meet with EU commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis in the US city of Pittsburgh on Wednesday. AFP

steel mill in the US city of Pittsburgh that has been converted into an advanced robotics research facility.

The talks were led on the US side by Blinken, his commerce counterpart Gina Raimondo and Trade Representative Katherine Tai, and on the European side by EU Executive Vice-Presidents Margrethe Vestager and Valdis Dombrovskis.

They did not announce specific actions but mapped out key areas for 10 working groups to focus on before the next meeting, which likely will be next spring in Europe, according to a European source.

"We represent those largest economies, collectively," Blinken said after the meeting. "When we're working together, we have a unique ability to help shape norms, the standards and rules that govern the way technology is used."

Seeking to address the global short-

age of vital computer chips, the officials pledged in their final communique to work together "on the rebalancing of global supply chains in semiconductors, with a view to enhancing respective security of supply" and production, including of the most advanced chips.

Demand for electronic devices of all kinds has exploded since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, as more people work, study and find entertainment at home.

Semiconductor manufacturers at times have had to temporarily close their factories due to Covid-19, leaving them struggling to meet global demand and hamstringing industries including automakers.

Raimondo has said the chip shortage is both an economic and a national security concern, and called for investments in domestic manufacturing in the EU and US. AFP

YouTube set to block anti-vaccine content rated misinformation

YOUTUBE on September 29 announced that it would remove videos and some high-profile users that falsely claim approved vaccines are dangerous, as social networks seek to crack down on health misinformation around Covid-19 and other diseases.

Video-sharing giant YouTube has already banned posts that spread false myths around coronavirus treatments, including ones that share inaccurate claims about Covid-19 vaccines shown to be safe.

But the Google-owned site said its concerns about the spread of medical conspiracy theories went beyond the pandemic.

"We've steadily seen false claims about the coronavirus vaccines spill over into misinformation about vaccines in general," YouTube said in a statement. "We're now at a point where it's more important than ever to expand the work we started with Covid-19 to other vaccines."

A YouTube spokesperson said channels of several "well-known vaccine misinformation spreaders will be terminated", naming Joseph Mercola and Sherri Tenpenny as well as a Robert F Kennedy Jr-affiliated channel.

Robert F Kennedy Jr had already been blocked from Instagram in February for spreading misinformation about Covid-19 and vaccines.

An AFP investigation found that Tenpenny runs a sprawling enterprise based on anti-vaccine activism, disdain for masks and testing, and denials that Covid-19 is real.

Mercola, an osteopathic physician based in the US state of Florida, was the subject of a *New York Times* article titled *The most influential spreader of coronavirus misinformation online*.

YouTube said the expanded policy will apply to "currently administered vaccines that are approved and confirmed to be

safe and effective by local health authorities and the WHO [World Health Organisation]."

It will see false claims about routine immunisations for diseases like measles and Hepatitis B removed from YouTube.

These would include cases where vloggers have claimed that approved vaccines do not work, or wrongly linked them to chronic health effects.

Content that "falsely says that approved vaccines cause autism, cancer or infertility, or that substances in vaccines can track those who receive them" will also be taken down.

"As with any significant update, it will take time for our systems to fully ramp up enforcement," YouTube added.

It stressed there would be exceptions to the new guidelines, with personal testimonials of negative experiences with vaccines still allowed, so long as "the channel doesn't show a pattern of promoting vaccine hesitancy".

YouTube said it had removed more than 130,000 videos since last year for violating its Covid-19 vaccine policies.

On September 28, the company told German media that it had blocked the German-language channels of Russia's state broadcaster RT for violating its Covid misinformation guidelines.

YouTube said it had issued a warning to RT before shutting the two channels down, but the move has prompted a threat from Moscow to block the video site.

It is not the only social media giant grappling with how to deal with the spread of Covid-19 conspiracy theories and medical misinformation in general.

Facebook this month launched a renewed effort to tackle extremist and conspiracy groups, beginning by taking down a German network spreading Covid misinformation. AFP

Top US General Milley calls 20-year war in Afghanistan 'strategic failure'

THE top US general conceded in a stark admission on September 29 that the US "lost" the 20-year war in Afghanistan.

"It is clear, it is obvious to all of us, that the war in Afghanistan did not end on the terms we wanted, with the Taliban in power in Kabul," US Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman General Mark Milley told the House

Armed Services Committee.

"The war was a strategic failure," Milley told a committee hearing about the US troop pullout from Afghanistan and the chaotic evacuation from the capital Kabul. "It wasn't lost in the last 20 days or even 20 months."

"There's a cumulative effect to a series of strategic decisions that

go way back," said the general, the top military adviser to President Joe Biden, who ordered an end to the 20-year US troop presence in Afghanistan.

"Whenever you get some phenomenon like a war that is lost - and it has been, in the sense of we accomplished our strategic task of protecting America against al-Qaeda, but certainly the end state is a whole lot different than what we wanted," Milley said.

"So whenever a phenomenon like that happens, there's an awful lot of causal factors," he said. "And we're going to have to figure that out. A lot of lessons learned here."

Milley listed a number of factors responsible for the US defeat going back to a missed opportunity to capture or kill al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden at Tora Bora soon after the 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan.

He also cited the 2003 decision to invade Iraq, which shifted US troops away from Afghanistan, "not effectively dealing with

Pakistan as a [Taliban] sanctuary", and pulling advisers out of Afghanistan a few years ago.

Biden, in April, ordered a complete pullout of US forces from Afghanistan by August 31, following through on an agreement reached with the Taliban by former president Donald Trump.

Milley and General Kenneth McKenzie, commander of US Central Command, told a Senate committee on September 28 that they had personally recommended that some 2,500 troops remain on the ground in Afghanistan.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden had received "split" advice about what to do in Afghanistan, which the US invaded following the September 11, 2001 al-Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington.

"Ultimately, it's up to the commander-in-chief to make a decision," Psaki said. "He made a decision that it was time to end a 20-year war." AFP



US Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman General Mark Milley concedes in a stark admission that the US 'lost' the war in Afghanistan. AFP



YouTube said it is removing channels that falsely claim proven vaccines are dangerous, including one belonging to anti-vaccine advocate Sherri Tenpenny. AFP

ASEAN facing \$2T challenge, opportunity to go green, stay competitive: major report

SOUTHEAST Asia has taken the first key steps to shifting to a greener and cleaner economy but it needs \$2 trillion of investment this decade to cut emissions and remain competitive globally, said a report released on September 29.

The report by management consultancy Bain & Company, Microsoft and Singapore's Temasek said the region needs to focus on three areas: speeding up the switch to green energy and transport; putting a value on nature; and making the agri-food sector more efficient, less polluting and less environmentally damaging.

Doing so will address about 90 per cent of the region's greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels, as well as address environmental damage from deforestation and fires, and inefficient agricultural practices, said the report titled *Southeast Asia's Green Economy: Opportunities On The Road To Net Zero*.

The authors said Southeast Asia is the start of many global supply chains, from resources and food such as rubber, rice and palm oil, to manufactured goods such as semiconductors. But right now, many of these supply chains are not climate-friendly, releasing large amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) that is heating up the planet and fuelling climate change.

That is placing the region and companies at a competitive disadvantage, the authors say, as big global customers increasingly demand doing business with firms whose climate goals are aligned with those of the Paris climate agreement.

The 2015 UN accord aims to keep global warming at well



Southeast Asia needs to tap abundant renewable energy resources and end its reliance on fossil fuels, especially coal, the report suggests.

THE STRAITS TIMES

below two degrees Celsius by the end of the century and, ideally, 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. Achieving this means governments and companies must reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

"Rich in natural resources, such as rice and rubber, Southeast Asia is the start of many supply chains – making the decarbonisation of Southeast Asia a non-negotiable for multinational corporations, which must re-imagine their supply chains to achieve net zero," Satish Shankar, regional managing partner, Bain & Company, Asia-Pacific, said in the report, released during Ecosperity Week – a sustainability conference organised by Temasek.

"While our potential is vast, Southeast Asia risks being left behind if we do not act now," he added.

Acting now could lead to about \$1 trillion in economic opportunities with new growth areas contributing about six-to-eight per cent to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030, the authors said.

The region needs to shift from resource extraction to electrification, energy efficiency, renewables such as solar and wind, grid modernisation, green transport and emerging carbon capture technology and hydrogen power. Increasingly, the region needs to tap abundant renewable energy resources such as geothermal,

solar and offshore wind and end its reliance on fossil fuels, especially coal.

It is a tall order for the rapidly growing region of more than 600 million people with huge energy needs: Forecast electricity demand growth of 5.4 per cent this year is the fastest for any region in the world, the report said. About 45 million people in ASEAN are still not connected to the power grid.

Yet while the \$2 trillion could help make the transition, the authors found that only \$9 billion was spent on green assets in 2020. The question is where the \$2 trillion will come from.

"The ADB [Asian Development Bank] estimates that about 40 per cent of infrastruc-

ture investments in Asia will need to come from the private sector. That Southeast Asia's governments are pandemic-strained further highlights the role the private sector must play in climate investments," said Mr Dale Hardcastle, Global Sustainability Innovation Centre co-director and partner at Bain & Company.

"Of the \$2 trillion investment needed in Southeast Asia, more than half are for sectors that have historically been attractive to private investors, for example, renewable energy, green buildings and construction, electric vehicle ecosystems, and the like."

The region also needs to protect its remaining rainforests,

peat swamps and mangroves, which soak up and store large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, acting as a brake on the pace of climate change.

These natural assets, or capital, lock away billions of tonnes of carbon, making them a hugely valuable resource for nations and investors who protect them, while reducing the region's carbon emissions.

Doing so could create a multi-billion-dollar market for carbon-offset trading to firms that want to cut their emissions by using nature-based solutions. It could also lead to better protection of nature in the region, in which hundreds of thousands of hectares of forests are still being cleared annually.

The authors say that failure to act will only fuel climate change impacts in the region, which is one of the most vulnerable to increasingly extreme storms, floods, droughts and fires, as well as accelerating sea level rise.

The region must do much better in its climate pledges under the Paris Agreement, too, said the authors. None of the nations in Southeast Asia has a climate plan that meets the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Only two – Indonesia and Laos – have net-zero commitments. At present, national climate plans put the region on a path to produce between three and four billion tonnes of greenhouse gases above what Southeast Asia should be producing by 2030 under the Paris 1.5C warming limit goal.

"Put simply, the world cannot achieve net zero without Southeast Asia coming along on the journey," the authors said.

THE STRAITS TIMES (SINGAPORE)/ ASIA NEWS NETWORK

Pacquiao retires from boxing with presidency in sights

PHILIPPINE boxing legend and 2022 presidential hopeful Manny Pacquiao on September 29 said he is hanging up his gloves after a glittering decades-long career in the ring.

The multi-division world champion and senator, who has his sights set on a high-stakes rumble to replace President Rodrigo Duterte, said quitting the sport that lifted him out of poverty was the "hardest decision" of his life.

"It is difficult for me to accept that my time for me as a boxer is over," the 42-year-old said in a video message on Twitter that quickly went viral.

"Today I am announcing my retirement," added Pacquiao, whose fights during his heyday stopped traffic in the Philippines – and even supposedly crime.

It comes weeks after Pacquiao, considered one of the best boxers of all time, lost what turned out to be

his last professional fight, against Cuban Yordenis Ugas in the US city of Las Vegas.

Pacquiao, who entered politics in 2010 as a congressman before being elected to the Senate, said last week that he will make a tilt for the country's highest office.

Pacquiao, a married father of five, thanked his millions of fans around the world and paid special tribute to his long-time trainer Freddie Roach who he described as "my family, a brother and a friend".

The decision ends weeks of speculation that Pacquiao was planning to retire after 26 years as a professional boxer. He ended with a 62-8 win-loss record and two draws.

"He's gonna go down as a legend of not just boxing but of the sporting world," Ted Lerner, a US-born sports journalist in the Philippines, told AFP. "In the future ... his name will be sort of synonymous with greatness, in the level of Michael Jordan or people who have transcended their sport and become like mythical legends."

In the video message, Pacquiao said boxing had given him "the chance to fight my way out of poverty" and "the courage to change more lives".

"I will never forget what I have done

and accomplished in my life. I can't imagine I just heard the final bell," said Pacquiao, who retired briefly in 2016 before reversing the decision.

Pacquiao is idolised by many in the Philippines both for his punching power and rise from desperate street kid to the peak of boxing.

He dropped out of high school at 14, sold doughnuts on the roadside and became a grocery stacker to help his mother support two younger siblings.

Within a few years, the diminutive southpaw was a pro boxer destined for the big time.

News of his retirement was greeted with mixed feelings in his southern hometown of General Santos, where support for the boxer runs deep.

"I am both happy and sad," Anna Rodriguez, 24, told AFP. "I am happy because he will be able to spend more time with his family, but I'm also sad because he will no longer bring pride to General Santos."

Manila taxi driver Jerry Barilea told AFP it was the right time for Pacquiao to bow out. "He's getting old, he really can't do it anymore," the 58-year-old said.

As he prepares to register as a presidential candidate, Pacquiao has

vowed to tackle poverty and corruption in a bid to win over voters with his rags-to-riches story.

After two terms as a congressman and one as a senator, Pacquiao's ambition is not unrealistic in a country famed for its celebrity-obsessed politics.

But victory is far from assured.

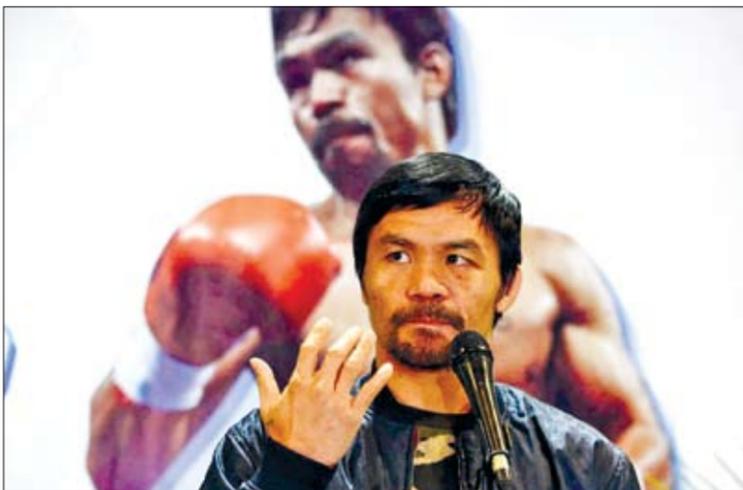
Fans see Pacquiao as living proof that success is possible for anyone who works hard, no matter their origins.

But Pacquiao has stirred controversy as a politician, earning him plenty of detractors.

Critics accuse the high-school dropout of lacking intellect and being a frequent no-show in the Senate, raising questions about his ability to run the country of 110 million people.

Less than a year out from the elections, Pacquiao has risked political capital in a public battle with Duterte, who rivals the boxer for the affections of many Filipinos and previously mentioned him as a possible successor.

He has also stirred controversy by backing Duterte's deadly drug war, which rights groups say has killed tens of thousands of mostly poor men and sparked an investigation by the International Criminal Court. AFP



Philippine boxing icon Manny Pacquiao has retired from the ring. AFP

Digital equity for all ages

Opinion

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

THE growing number and share of older persons in Asia and the Pacific represent success stories of declining fertility and increasing longevity; the result of advances in social and economic development. This demographic transition is taking place against the backdrop of the accelerating Fourth Industrial Revolution. But Covid-19, with its epicentre now in Asia and the Pacific, has exacerbated the suffering of older persons in vulnerable situations and demonstrated the fragility of this progress.

Asia and the Pacific is home to the largest number of older persons in the world – and rapidly ageing. When the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015, eight per cent of the region's total population was 65 years or older. By 2030, when the Agenda comes to an end, it is projected that 12 per cent of the total population – one in eight people – will comprise older persons. Fifty-four per cent of all older persons in the region will be women, and their share will increase with age.

Asia and the Pacific has made much progress in connecting the region through information and communication technologies (ICTs). At the same time, it is still the most digitally divided region in the world. Approximately half of its population lacks internet access. Women and older persons – especially older women – are the least likely to be digitally connected.

Covid-19 has demonstrated how technologies can help fight the spread of the virus, sustain daily life, support business continuity and keep people socially connected. It has also shown that those who are excluded from the digital transformation, including older persons, are at increased risk of being permanently left behind. Digital equity for all ages is, therefore, more important than ever.

The next few years provide an opportunity for Asia and the Pacific to build on its successes with regard to population ageing and rapid digital transformation, learn from the tragic consequences of the pandemic, and promote and strengthen the inclusion of older persons in the digital world. The 2022 Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the further elaboration of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway will allow countries to develop policies and action plans to achieve digital equity for all ages.



Women look at a phone as they attend a training session to get retirees up to speed with digital devices at the Xiaojiahe University of Old Age in Chengdu, the capital of China's Sichuan province, in November last year. AFP

Among those policies, it is particularly important to promote digital literacy and narrow digital skills gaps of older persons through tailored peer-to-peer or intergenerational training programmes. In the fast-changing digital environment, developing, strengthening and maintaining digital literacy requires a life-course approach.

Moreover, providing accessible, affordable and reliable internet connectivity for persons of all ages must be a priority. Expanding digital infra-

persons, for instance, through telemedicine or robotic surgery. Assistive technology devices and solutions can support more and safer mobility for older persons, especially those with disabilities or living alone. Social media platforms can promote social interaction and reduce social isolation and loneliness.

The ESCAP Guidebook on using Information Communication Technologies to address the health-care needs of older persons has documented good practices from around

As we commemorate the UN International Day of Older Persons 2021, let us remind ourselves that the risks and vulnerabilities experienced by older persons during the pandemic are not new. Many older persons in the region lack social protection such as access to universal health care and pensions.

The Covid-19 recovery is an opportunity to set the stage for a more inclusive, equitable and age-friendly society, anchored in human rights and guided by the promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind. Digital equity for all ages, highlighted in the 2030 Agenda, goes beyond national interests.

Greater digital cooperation by governments and stakeholders is instrumental for both inclusive and sustainable development and building back better. At the regional and sub-regional levels, digital cooperation can be fruitfully leveraged to build consensus and share good practices, lessons learned, and policy recommendations. These, in turn, can supplement national level policy and decision-making for the benefit of all age groups.

The writer is UN undersecretary-general and executive secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Providing accessible, affordable and reliable internet connectivity for persons of all ages must be a priority

structure, geographical coverage and digital inclusion of older persons through targeted policies and programmes will improve access, enable greater social participation, empower older persons, and enhance their ability to live independently.

As highlighted in the Madrid Plan of Action, technology can reduce health risks and promote cost-efficient access to healthcare for older

the region. It also includes policy recommendations and a checklist for policymakers to mainstream ICTs in policies affecting older persons.

While older persons are among the least digitally connected population groups, they are among the most vulnerable to cyberthreats. It is, therefore, critical to establish adequate safety measures, raise awareness, and teach older users to be cautious online.

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Lifestyle

Master ceramist protects Khmer pottery traditions as lifetime legacy

Roth Sochieata

LIKE many who survived the nightmare years living under Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime, Yary Livan emerged from the experience secretly carrying with him some portion of the Khmer culture's traditional knowledge and skills that Cambodia's new leaders were trying to violently erase in order to reset society so they could implement their version of totalitarian communism.

The most important cultural knowledge that Livan was safeguarding personally turned out to be his expertise with traditional Khmer ceramic designs and pottery, something that was already a rarity back in 1971 when he began attending the Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA) as a ceramics major.

Then the Khmer Rouge seized power in 1975 and Year Zero was proclaimed. Everything old had to be discarded or destroyed in order to force everyone into accepting the Khmer Rouge's mad plans to remake Cambodia as *fait accompli*.

"Back then, if we told [the Khmer Rouge] that we were college students – absolutely – we would have been killed. But if we could convince them that we were blue-collar and worked as a plumber or carpenter – as long as it wasn't school related – they would let us go.

"I decided to tell them that I'd just learned to draw. My father was a teacher but we said he was a machinist. My mom was luckier – she got to keep her profession – because she actually was a very good tailor. She made really great hats. That was how we survived until 1979, when the regime ended and I was finally able to continue my studies," Livan tells *The Post*.

Livan graduated from university and got married in 1984. His family was just a few people out of the hundreds of thousands of Cambodians turned into refugees who ended up living in camps along the border with Thailand after fleeing from the brutality of the Khmer Rouge or the violence of war when Vietnam invaded Cambodia and swept them from power.

"We moved to the refugee camp at Chonburi in Thailand until everything settled down and then we moved back to Cambodia in 1988. Upon returning, I had no job prospects secured at all and I just worked here and there, sometimes for NGOs and sometimes drawing

portraits at the pagoda to earn a little money. It wasn't until later on – 2001 – that I moved to the US," Livan says.

The veteran ceramist says he felt very welcome in Lowell, Massachusetts, which has one of the largest Cambodian communities in the US. About 13 per cent of Lowell's residents are Cambodian-Americans.

Livan has the sad distinction of being the only master Khmer ceramist in the US and some experts believe he was one of just three Khmer potters good enough to be considered masters who survived the genocide.

Livan's talents with ceramics are considerable – they won him a scholarship in ceramics at Harvard University after he immigrated to the US and today he's a ceramics professor on the faculty at two schools: University of Massachusetts – Lowell and Middlesex Community College.

Back in 2015, Livan was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Heritage Fellowship, which is the "highest honor the US government awards in the folk and traditional arts." The NEA is a US federal government agency established in 1965 to support and fund projects in the arts.

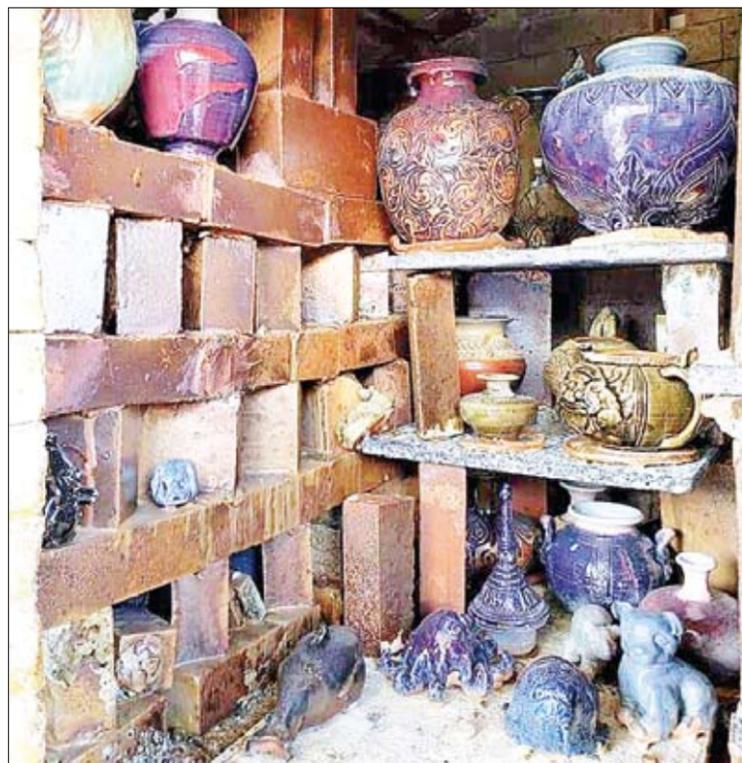
According to the NEA, the heritage fellowships are "awarded to those artists who work to preserve their traditions within the larger American culture, creating bold, new hybrids of artistic forms while maintaining the traditions that make the art form significant."

Livan used the NEA grant money to fund the training of apprentices in Khmer ceramic arts to continue the mission forced on him by circumstance back in 1975 – but it hasn't been easy to find students with his level of passion for pottery.

"Kids nowadays are impatient. They're more into computers or digital art rather than things that are solid and directly hand-made that old people like



Harvard graduate ceramics professor Yary Livan, 67, has pottery displayed in museums in Washington DC and Boston. SUPPLIED



Now a resident of Lowell, Massachusetts, Livan makes ceramic pottery following the ancient Khmer design traditions that he first studied here at RUFA in 1971. SUPPLIED

me prefer. I've trained a few Khmer students, but so far none of them have been sufficiently committed – other than my sons, who have turned out to be my best apprentices," Livan says.

Livan feels he must be cautious about the style of ceramics he produces because of the role he has protecting Khmer pottery and ceramics traditions. He says it is easy for even advanced ceramics students to confuse Khmer and Thai styles of pottery, which are similar to each other – but not the same.

"I would hate it if our Khmer arts turned into something that couldn't be identified or if it lost its authenticity. I want to maintain what is distinct about the real ancient Khmer ceramics traditions. That is why the American government values and supports my work after all – because I am helping to preserve ancient Khmer arts and culture," Livan says.

The ceramics professor says he's thankful for every moment of life he has been blessed with given how easily it all could have come to an abrupt end back in the 1970's as was the fate of so many of his friends, family and fellow students at RUFA.

"Every time I complete any of my ceramics pieces it brings a smile to

my face because it feels like something that was lost has now been found again. A little piece of the past gets resurrected," Livan says.

He says that he's had plenty of opportunities to showcase his artwork and on the occasions that he's put items up for auction or sale he's been very proud to see the high prices collectors have paid for his work, but it's sometimes tough for him to let go of his creations.

"Honestly – if I were a millionaire, I would not sell any of them. But I arrived in America empty-handed and I have to earn money to provide for my family so I do sell them and I ease my regrets by reminding myself that these people are buying them and paying good money because they love ceramics in the same way that I do and I'm getting to share that with them.

"... But some things I'm still just not willing to ever sell," Livan says with a laugh.

After 40 years as a ceramist he can say for certain that anyone who is looking to make money should try a different career path because the traditional arts find their value mostly in people's love and appreciation for them rather than in cold hard cash. At this point he

lives a comfortable life and money is not his concern, rather his legacy and the continuation of Khmer ceramics is what's on his mind.

"Now, in America, as far as I know I'm the only Cambodian potter with enough skill to be regarded as a master because I can produce anything to a high standard of quality and I understand what I'm doing well-enough to teach it to others. However, I'm already in my sixties and I'm really afraid that if something happens to me there will be no heir to my knowledge and skills," says Livan.

All is not lost quite yet, though, because Livan still lives – and so do his sons, who continue to learn more each day.

They've come up with a plan to hold a Khmer ceramics and pottery exhibition to promote the art form and that aspect of Khmer cultural heritage to Cambodians and the rest of the world.

Right now the exhibition is in the early planning stages and he's looking for individuals or institutions to finance it as well as other Khmer ceramists to participate, ideally. He plans to first hold the exhibition in the US and then bring it to Cambodia.

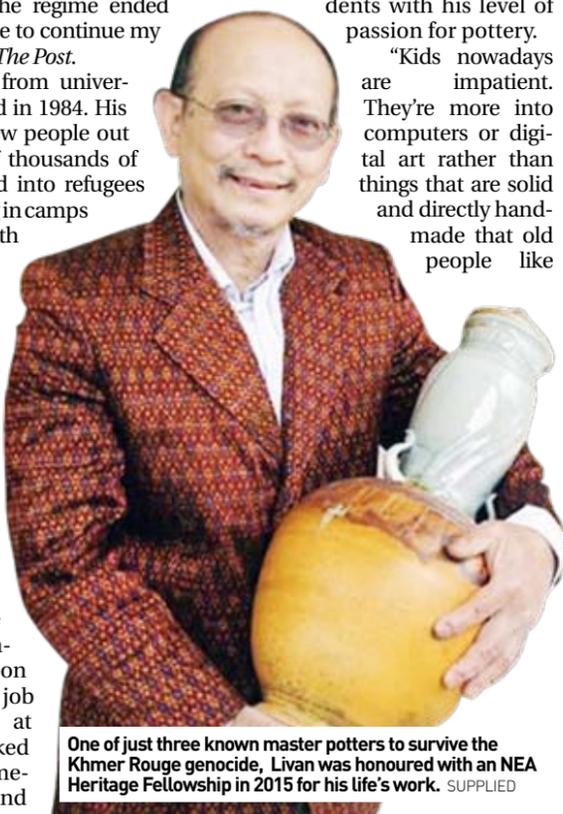
Livan says that it won't take long to put the whole project together and he expects it will take definite shape over the next year and be held within the next two years.

He is confident that it will happen because he's had a lot of experience with past exhibitions and he has the serious establishment-approved credibility as an academic and an artist that will enable him to enlist the support of the larger arts organizations and backers in the US.

"I can't give you an exact time frame, but rest assured – it will definitely happen. I love America because people here are always very supportive of other people's grand ideas and if you put enough effort into something you'll always find some way to promote it and get the necessary financing.

"It's sad to say, but honestly [the US government] seems to value and support the preservation of Khmer culture more than some Cambodians do. But I'd like to help change that and I think an exhibition to celebrate the beauty of Khmer ceramics and pottery hosted by Cambodia is a good first step," Livan says ■

For more information Yary Livan can be contacted via his Facebook page [web.facebook.com/yary.livan](https://www.facebook.com/yary.livan)



One of just three known master potters to survive the Khmer Rouge genocide, Livan was honoured with an NEA Heritage Fellowship in 2015 for his life's work. SUPPLIED

Thinking caps

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17					18						19			
20				21						22				
		23	24							25				
26	27				28		29	30	31					
32				33			34					35	36	37
38					39	40					41			
42				43							44			
		45						46	47		48			
	49	50						51	52					
53					54		55					56	57	58
59						60						61		
62					63						64			
65						66						67		

"TRANS AM"

ACROSS

- 1 Snatches
- 6 Cornfield sounds
- 10 Semisolid foods
- 14 In a lather, old-style
- 15 Toolbar graphic
- 16 Very full hairstyle
- 17 "Jealous?"
- 20 Flub
- 21 Enough, in some cases
- 22 Scaling aids
- 23 Fourth in a series of 12
- 25 Write footnotes
- 26 Cheese nibblers
- 28 Scone, e.g.
- 32 Bony cavities, anatomically
- 34 Wheel nuts
- 35 "Kapow!"
- 38 "Feed me now!"
- 42 Render less than perfect
- 43 Nondormant one
- 44 Came to
- 45 Bud holder
- 48 Steinbeck title starter
- 49 Italics do it

DOWN

- 1 Butter used by Indians
- 2 Act like a startled horse
- 3 Drawing card, essentially
- 4 Pay the price for
- 5 Hound's trail
- 6 There's simply no end to it
- 7 Throbbing pain
- 8 Distress
- 9 Break suddenly
- 10 York peppermint product
- 11 Not on horseback
- 12 Shape a shrub
- 13 They don't say "when"
- 18 Military body

19 Leg-powered taxi (Var.)

- 24 Andean land
- 26 Hurt and disable
- 27 Andean civilization
- 29 Word with "false" or "fire"
- 30 Director's cry
- 31 Khan's title
- 33 Firm, spaghetti-wise
- 35 Karakul pelt
- 36 Seeks some answers
- 37 Convene
- 39 Buck's companion
- 40 Suffix with "command"
- 41 "A Prayer for ___ Meany"
- 45 Thick-trunked African tree
- 46 State of existing
- 47 Sheltered valley
- 49 Sailor's time off
- 50 Come on stage
- 52 Holding one's piece?
- 53 God, in Latin class
- 54 Carve in stone
- 55 Thunder sound
- 57 Choral designation
- 58 Cold war inits.
- 60 Which person?
- 61 Tokyo, formerly

Sudoku Pacific

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

	3			4	7			
				2		9	6	
1		9		6				3
3				8	1			6
				9				
6			3	5				4
	4			7		1		5
	8	5		1				
			5	3				8

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Thursday's solution

S	E	R	F	S	A	V	A	S	T	C	R	T			
A	D	I	E	U	P	A	P	P	Y	O	A	R			
C	O	O	W	N	E	R	S	H	I	P	O	V	A		
		E	L	L						L	E	I			
D	E	C	R	E	E	D		D	I	S	T	A	N	T	
E	G	O		S	C	U	D			T	E	R	N		
A	G	O		S	T	E	R	E		T	U	D	O	R	
L	A	K	E		S	T	O	R		M		E	C	R	U
T	R	I	A	D		S	I	R	E	S		A	I	M	
		E	R	R	S		D	O	D	O		L	Y	E	
L	E	S	S	O	N	S		L	I	N	E	M	A	N	
H	A	H		P	O	T				C	A	M			
A	G	E		C	O	O	R	D	I	N	A	T	E	S	
S	E	E		A	Z	I	N	E		T	I	A	R	A	
A	R	T		P	E	C	A	N		S	L	O	A	N	

Thursday's solution

4	6	2	9	5	3	1	8	7
9	5	7	1	6	8	3	2	4
3	8	1	4	7	2	5	9	6
6	2	3	8	4	1	9	7	5
8	9	4	5	2	7	6	1	3
1	7	5	3	9	6	2	4	8
5	1	8	2	3	4	7	6	9
2	3	6	7	8	9	4	5	1
7	4	9	6	1	5	8	3	2



A woman stands in front of an empty frame hung up at the Kunsten Museum in Aalborg, Denmark, on Tuesday. AFP

Danish artist gives blank canvas for museum cash

A DANISH museum loaned an artist 534,000 kroner (\$84,000) in cash to recreate old artworks of his using the banknotes, but he ended up pocketing the money and sending blank canvasses with a new title: *Take the Money and Run*.

Jens Haaning, a Danish artist, was commissioned by the Kunsten Museum in the western city of Aalborg to reproduce two works using the cash – Danish kroner and euros – to represent the annual salary in Denmark and Austria.

But the museum's director Lasse Andersson told AFP that "two days before the opening of the exhibition we got an email from Jens telling us he won't be showing the works we agreed on".

The artist was true to his word, sending two blank canvasses.

Andersson said he laughed out loud and decided to show the works anyway in the museum's modern art exhibition that opened on

September 24. He said they have a "humoristic approach" and were "a reflection on how we value work".

Haaning, 56, defended keeping the money, saying "the artwork is essentially about the working conditions of artists".

"It is a statement saying that we also have the responsibility of questioning the structures that we are part of. And if these structures are completely unreasonable, we must break with them," he said in a press release.

While the museum's director has seen the funny side so far, he indicated that would only last until the end of the exhibition.

"If the money is not returned on January 16 as agreed, we will take the necessary steps to ensure that Jens Haaning complies with his contract," Andersson said.

For his original commission, Haaning received 10,000 kroner (\$1,500), plus an exhibition bonus. AFP

World's shortest cow achieves posthumous Guinness fame

A KNEE-HIGH celebrity cow that became a sensation in Bangladesh has won posthumous recognition as the shortest on the planet just weeks after its untimely demise.

Rani, just 50.8cm high, became an instant internet celebrity with tens of thousands of people rushing to the farm she lived on outside Dhaka for a glimpse of the miniature cow.

But just after its owners applied to Guinness World Records, tragedy struck on August 19 when the beloved bovine suddenly died due to a sudden internal build-up of gas.

The cow's owner Kazi Mohammad Abu Sufian said he received an email on Monday from Guinness World Records saying that Rani's application had been accepted.

A statement on the Guinness website con-

firmed the miniature Bhutti world-record cow's status, beating the previous holder, an Indian cow named Manikyam that stood 61 centimetres from hoof to withers.

"We sent several video of Rani in line with Guinness World Records prescriptions. We have also sent the post-mortem report to the Guinness authorities to see that there was nothing unusual about her death," Sufian told AFP.

Sufian said he had also sent Guinness Rani's medical records after they asked whether she had received hormone injections.

"We have a mixed feelings after Rani got the recognition. We are happy that she got her due honours. But we are at the same very sad because she is no more with us," Sufian said.

"Her carer burst out crying as soon as we told him the news." AFP



A regular-sized domestic cow stands next to a dwarf cow named Rani, whose owners applied to the Guinness Book of Records claiming it was the smallest cow in the world. AFP

Sport

'Improper' influence on blocking of Newcastle takeover

THE Premier League was "improperly influenced" by other English top-flight clubs and media group beIN in coming to a decision that effectively blocked the Saudi takeover of Newcastle United, a tribunal was told on Wednesday.

The "active lobbying" by the clubs and beIN, which owns the broadcast rights for the league in the Middle East and north Africa, "distorted the Premier League's fair and objective application of the rules" in relation to the proposed deal, it was argued.

The league is a defendant in a Competition Appeals Tribunal (CAT) claim brought by St James Holdings Ltd (SJHL), a company wholly owned by Newcastle owner Mike Ashley – an unpopular figure with many fans of the northeast club, who are angered by what they see as his failure to invest in the team.

A consortium featuring Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, Amanda Staveley's PCP Capital Partners and the Reuben Brothers withdrew its £350 million (\$460 million) offer for Newcastle in 2020 following a long wait for the Premier League to approve the deal.

The basis of the claim is that the Premier League, in deciding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would be a director exercising control over the club and therefore subject to its owners' and directors' test, did not apply its rules in a fair, objective and non-discriminatory manner, causing SJHL to suffer a financial loss that currently "exceeds £10 million".

The Premier League, however, argues the tribunal does not have jurisdiction to hear the claim.

Adam Lewis, acting for the league, said an arbitration hearing connected to the dispute over the Newcastle takeover bid is set to start on January 3 next year and that, as a result, the competition claim from SJHL was an "abuse of process" or premature at the least.

Newcastle are currently just above the relegation zone on goal difference and are winless after six league games this season. AFP



The Newcastle logo is displayed on the empty rows of seats at the stadium last year. POOL/AFP

United saved as Barca, Chelsea plunge

BARCELONA plunged even further into crisis on Wednesday with a thumping Champions League defeat at Benfica while holders Chelsea were beaten by Juventus but Cristiano Ronaldo grabbed a precious last-gasp winner for Manchester United.

Ronald Koeman's Barcelona side already look at real risk of an early exit from this season's Champions League after suffering a second 3-0 defeat in as many games in Group E and finishing the match in Lisbon with 10 men.

Uruguayan forward Darwin Nunez starred for Benfica, opening the scoring early on and then hitting the post early in the second half. He later completed the rout from the penalty spot following a Sergino Dest handball, while in between Rafa Silva also netted for the Portuguese former European Cup winners.

Eric Garcia was sent off for Barcelona, who have now conceded 11 goals in their last two visits to the Estadio da Luz, the scene of their 8-2 annihilation at the hands of Bayern Munich in the 2020 quarter-finals.

Barca are rock bottom of their group while Bayern followed their victory at the Camp Nou a fortnight ago with a 5-0 home win over Dynamo Kiev, with Robert Lewandowski's first-half brace setting the Bavarians on their way.

Lewandowski, who netted the opener from the penalty spot, now has a career tally of 77 Champions League goals, third in the all-time list behind Ronaldo and Lionel Messi.

Serge Gnabry, Leroy Sane and Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting added further goals after the break for a rampant Bayern.

Barcelona's defeat leaves Koeman – who took Benfica to the Champions League quarter-finals in 2006 – in an even more fragile position. They have made it to the knockout rounds in each of the last 17 seasons.

"I can't say anything because I don't know what the club feels about



Benfica's Brazilian defender Lucas Verissimo (left) heads the ball in front of Barcelona's Dutch forward Memphis Depay and Benfica's Argentine defender Nicolas Otamendi (left) during the UEFA Champions League first round group E match on Wednesday. AFP

this," said Koeman about his future. "We'll see."

Chelsea will still be expected to qualify for the last 16 despite losing 1-0 to Juventus in Turin with Federico Chiesa scoring the only goal of the game 10 seconds into the second half.

The star of Italy's Euro 2020-winning side latched onto Federico Bernardeschi's assist to beat Edouard Mendy and give Massimiliano Allegri's team a second straight win in Group H.

Juve are still adapting to life since the return of Allegri as coach and the departure of Ronaldo but this could be a formative result for them against the holders.

"We gave a cheap goal away and that made things more complicated for ourselves," said Chelsea coach Thomas Tuchel.

Chelsea had started their defence of the trophy with a 1-0 win over Zenit Saint

Petersburg, and the Russian champions bounced back to beat Malmo 4-0.

Claudio Pinha, who won Olympic gold with Brazil in Tokyo, opened the scoring before Daler Kuzyaev, Aleksei Sutormin and Wendel all added second-half goals.

United bounce back

Ronaldo popped up in the last of five minutes of stoppage time to score and give United a 2-1 win over Villarreal at Old Trafford.

Jesse Lingard cutely set up Ronaldo to score his record-extending 136th goal in the competition as United bounced back from their last-gasp defeat to Young Boys in Bern last time out.

Alex Telles had earlier hauled the hosts back level on the hour mark with a superb first-time volley from a Bruno Fernandes delivery for his first goal for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side.

Paco Alcacer had given Villarreal the

lead in what was a rematch of last season's Europa League final, won by the Spanish outfit on penalties.

"We had to throw caution to the wind and got lucky in the end," said Solskjaer. "When you've got Cristiano on the pitch there is always a chance."

United and Young Boys trail a point behind Group F leaders Atalanta, who defeated the Swiss champions 1-0 in Italy with a Matteo Pessina goal.

Teenage German starlet Karim Adeyemi netted two penalties, one in each half, as Red Bull Salzburg beat French champions Lille 2-1 to go top of Group G on four points.

Burak Yilmaz pulled one back for Lille but they prop up the section, while Sevilla snatched a 1-1 draw at Wolfsburg after a late Ivan Rakitic penalty cancelled out Renato Steffen's opener for the Germans, who had Josuha Guilavogui sent off. AFP

Tyson Fury wary of 'make-or-break' Wilder

WORLD heavyweight champion Tyson Fury believes he will be facing the most dangerous incarnation of Deontay Wilder yet when he clashes with his American rival for the third time next month.

Fury, the undefeated World Boxing Council heavyweight champion, faces Wilder in a tril-

ogy fight in Las Vegas on October 9 in his first bout since dethroning the 35-year-old from Alabama via a seventh technical knockout in February last year.

That victory followed an epic 2018 battle between the two heavyweights in Los Angeles which ended in a draw after

Fury remarkably climbed off the canvas following a 12th round knockdown.

Fury had initially been set for a unification fight this year with former world champion Anthony Joshua, but was ordered to grant Wilder a rematch in May after the intervention of an independent arbitrator.

The fight was originally due to be held in July but was postponed until October after Fury's training camp was hit by an outbreak of Covid-19.

Talking to reporters on a video conference call on Wednesday, Fury (30-0-1, with 21 knockouts) said next week's fight was "make-or-break" for the hard-hitting Wilder.

"The one thing I don't do is underestimate anybody," Fury said. "Whether it's the smallest man in the room or the fattest man in the room, I'll never underestimate anyone."

"Make no mistake – this will be Deontay Wilder's make-or-break moment in his life. Any-

body can lose a fight, anybody can have a bad night.

"But this is his make-or-break fight. He's a three-to-one underdog. He's got everything to gain and nothing to lose."

"Everyone expects me to go in there and beat him down – which I will – but you can never write Deontay Wilder off because he's at his most dangerous now."

'Wounded' by Joshua loss

Fury said he had been "wounded" watching Joshua lose his WBA, IBF and WBO belts in a defeat to Oleksandr Usyk on Saturday, effectively scuppering any chance of a money-spinning unification fight with his fellow Briton.

However the self-styled "Gypsy King" would not be drawn further on Joshua's defeat or whether he had considered a future fight with Usyk.

"Usyk did his job, and that's all I know," Fury said when asked about the Ukrainian's perform-

ance. "He won his fight, and good luck to him."

"There's not much to assess or express. Did I watch the fight? Yes I did. Was I absolutely wounded when Usyk won? Yes I was."

"I was hoping that Joshua could win the fight. But he couldn't and that's none of my business."

"So my only concern now is beating Deontay Wilder – he's the most dangerous heavyweight out there. In my opinion, Wilder beats Joshua, Usyk, all the rest of the division comfortably – but he cannot beat me."

"I've no real concern about anything else other than Wilder, I've got a mammoth task ahead."

"It's a very dangerous task that I'm giving 100 percent focus, and I don't care who I fight after this."

"Let me get through Wilder first and then on Sunday morning we can talk about who I'll fight next. But right now I don't give a damn." AFP



Boxers Deontay Wilder (right) and Tyson Fury attend a press conference in Los Angeles, California, on June 15. AFP