



NEWSLETTER

KAS CAMBODIA OFFICE



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Newsletter: 1st – 31st October 2015

A selection of the latest local news in Cambodia

Two More Nauru Refugees Expected



Arrival of the first four refugees from Nauru at Phnom Penh International Airport in June

According to their AU\$40 million resettlement deal, Cambodia will receive an unspecified number of refugees from Australia. After the first four refugees arrived from the South Pacific island of Nauru in June, four more expressed their interest to settle in Cambodia. According to a statement of Cambodian Interior Minister H.E. Sar Kheng on 1st October, two have now decided to leave for Cambodia. The date of their arrival

is still to be announced. Whilst three of the four initial refugees are said to settle down well, the fourth, an ethnic Rohingya man, requested to return to Myanmar. His case as well as the resettlement deal in general has been criticized by several human rights organizations. Likewise, Australia's long-term detention of about 600 refugees on Nauru is seen with scepticism by many and has become subject to an investigation of the Australian High Court.

Further Reading

Two More Refugees to Arrive from Nauru
By Mech Dara and Peter Zsombor | October 2, 2015
The Cambodia Daily
<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/two-more-refugees-to-arrive-from-nauru-96170/>

High Court Tests Legality of Detention on Nauru
By Reuters | October 8, 2015
The Cambodia Daily
<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/cdfiles/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Cambodia-Daily-2015-10-08.pdf>

Refugees From Nauru Are Searching for Jobs



**Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung**



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By George Wright | October 17-18, 2015

The Cambodia Daily

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/refugees-from-nauru-are-searching-for-jobs-97455/>

Refugee deal comes under criticism again

By Zoe Holman | October 21, 2015

The Phnom Penh Post

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/refugee-deal-comes-under-criticism-again>

Image Source

http://www.phnompenhpost.com/sites/default/files/styles/full-screen/public/field/image/refugee_phalina.jpg?itok=VEOBIy2C

10 Percent Increase in Garment Minimum Wage



Union leader Ath Thorn at a minimum wage demonstration

Cambodia's garment industry, employing about 700.000 people and accounting for a third of its country's GDP, is currently negotiating a new minimum wage to be implemented in January 2016 – a endeavor which appeared rather intricate. The current minimum wage of \$128 is too low to support a living, the working group, which is made up of representatives of the factories, the unions and the government, has not been

able to reach a consensus and handed over three different proposals; the factories' final offer of \$133, the unions' final demand of \$160 and the governments suggestion of \$135 to the Labor Advisory Committee. The final figure of \$140 was announced on 8th October by Labor Minister H.E. Ith Samheng. Whilst factories are now concerned that buyers might turn to other low-wage competitors such as Bangladesh or Myanmar, unionists are unsatisfied with the result. The Swedish label H&M was the first brand to publicly back the raise.

Further Reading

Compromise Remains Elusive in Minimum Wage Negotiations

By Mech Dara | October 8, 2015

The Cambodia Daily

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/compromise-remains-elusive-in-minimum-wage-negotiations-96839/>

Cambodia raises minimum wage for garment workers

N.N. | October 8, 2015



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BBC News

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34474397>

Garment Sector Minimum Wage Raised to \$140

By Mech Dara | October 9, 2015

The Cambodia Daily

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/lac-ups-garment-salary-140-0>

Garment unions weigh protests

By Mom Kunthea | October 19, 2015

The Phnom Penh Post

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/garment-unions-weigh-protests>

Image Source

http://www.phnompenhpost.com/sites/default/files/styles/full-screen_watermarked/public/field/image/ath_thorn_heng_chivoan.jpg?itok=nMphstJR

National Budget for 2016 Published



Students search for books and articles at a library in Phnom Penh

ficiaries are the education and defense sector. Education Minister H.E. Hang Chuon Naron indicated that most of the additional financial resources will be used for teachers' salaries and trainings. Nonetheless, members of the oppositional Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) criticized the draft as it is lacking detailed information on how the ministries will spend the additional funds.

With Prime Minister Hun Sen having approved the draft for the national budget of 2016, the final decision is now up to the parliament. According to the draft, which Council of Ministers spokesperson Phay Siphan published on 21st October, total government spending will rise by 12.3% from \$3.8 billion to \$4.27 billion in 2016. Made possible is the raise by increased enforcement of tax laws as well as foreign lending. Main bene-

Further Reading

Defense and Education Get Major Boost in New Budget

By Kuch Naren and Alex Willemyns | October 22, 2015

The Cambodia Daily

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/defense-and-education-get-major-boost-in-new-budget-97854/>

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Budget Figures released

By Vong Sokheng and Shaun Turton | October 22, 2015

The Phnom Penh Post

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/budget-figures-released>**Image Source**http://www.phnompenhpost.com/sites/default/files/styles/full-screen_watermarked/public/field/image/education_budget_hong_menea.jpg**Unlicensed Doctor Accused of Infecting Hundreds with HIV**

The accused, on trial for his involvement in a HIV outbreak in Roka village, is escorted out of Battambang Provincial Court

An unlicensed medic, who is accused of infecting 270 Roka villagers with HIV by using the same syringes multiple times, has been put on trial in front of Battambang Provincial Court. With ten of the villagers having died of HIV-related diseases since the discovery of the mass outbreak in December 2014 and more than 100 infected villagers having filed complaints against him, the self-appointed doctor is charged with aggravated murder and, if convicted,

could face a lifetime in prison. The man's family, convinced of his innocence but afraid of retaliation by the villagers, went to live with relatives in Battambang City. He himself denies the accusations. While the trial goes on, many of the victims face discrimination, shame and humiliation.

Further Reading

Unlicensed Medic on Trial Over HIV Outbreak

By Khy Sovuthy and Anthony Jensen | October 21, 2015

The Cambodia Daily

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/unlicensed-medic-on-trial-over-hiv-outbreak-97724/>

Roka Village grapples with shame

By May Titthara | October 22, 2015

The Phnom Penh Post

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/roka-village-grapples-shame>

HIV-Infected Villagers Continue Trial Testimony

By Khy Sovuthy | October 23, 2015

The Cambodia Daily

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/hiv-infected-villagers-continue-trial-testimony-98069/>**Image Source**

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http://www.phnompenhpost.com/sites/default/files/styles/full-screen_watermarked/public/field/image/roka_hiv_heng_chivoan.jpg

Tensions between Governing Party and Opposition

Following an aggravated tone in political debate, demonstrations - some accompanied by violent outbreaks and leaving two opposition lawmakers injured - CPP supporters demanded the resignation of H.E. Kem Sokha, deputy leader of the oppositional Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP), as vice president of the National Assembly.

When all 68 CPP lawmakers voted with "Yes" in a rather unexpected National Assembly ballot in the morning of 30th October – boycotted by all 55 CNRP members of parliament, first NA president H.E. Heng Samrin officially announced H.E. Kem Sokha's removal from his post. According to the governing CPP, the party had received a petition signed by 300.000 citizens requesting the dismissal of the vice president, who is said to have caused too many disputes between the two parties. CNRP leaders H.E. Sam Rainsy and H.E. Kem Sokha called the ousting a violation of the constitution, which according to Article 87 provides for a replacement of the president or vice president only in the case of voluntary resignation or death. CNRP thus far refused to name another candidate, which means that up to now the post has remained vacant.



CNRP deputy leader Kem Sokha talking to the media at the National Assembly earlier this year

Further Reading

Cambodian opposition leader loses parliamentary post in unexpected vote by ruling party

By Associated Press | October 30, 2015

Fox News

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/10/30/cambodian-opposition-leader-loses-parliamentary-post-in-unexpected-vote-by/>

Sokha stripped of National Assembly vice presidency

By Shaun Turton and Chhay Channyda | October 30, 2015

The Phnom Penh Post

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/sokha-stripped-national-assembly-vice-presidency>

Kem Sokha Ousted As National Assembly VP

By Kuch Naren | October 30, 2015

The Cambodia Daily



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<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/kem-sokha-ousted-as-national-assembly-vp-98913/>

CPP ousts Sokha from Assembly post

By Chhay Channyda and Shaun Turton | October 31, 2015

The Phnom Penh Post

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/cpp-ousts-sokha-assembly-post>

Image Source

http://www.phnompenhpost.com/sites/default/files/styles/full-screen/public/field/image/kem_sokha_vireak_mai.jpg?itok=r1Klc9D5

Cambodians Celebrate Traditional Pchum Ben Festival

Celebrated for a total of 15 days and culminating in three public holidays on October 11, 12 and 13, Pchum Ben is the largest of the twelve traditional festivities Cambodians celebrate over the year. During the holidays, many people went to their home towns, visited the local pagodas and brought rice to the spirits of their passed ancestors as well as the monks. Considered to have done plenty of good deeds, the monks are believed to be able to pass on the donations to the spirits of the ancestors. Being passed on as myths and legends, the festival's exact origins remain unclear; nonetheless, it has been celebrated for as long as anyone can remember.



Citizens in Kangmeas District, Kampong Cham Province, bring rice to the pagoda during traditional Pchum Ben holidays

Further Reading

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By Khhear Sonong | October 12, 2015

Radio Free Asia (RFA)

<http://www.rfa.org/khmer/news/social-economy/Others-choices-for-celebrating-Pchum-ben-10122015042951.html>

The Cycle of Rice: Rice for the Spirits

By Anthony Jensen and Kang Sothea | October 17-18, 2015

The Cambodia Daily

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/cycleofrice3/>

Image Source

<http://www.rfa.org/khmer/news/social-economy/Others-choices-for-celebrating-Pchum-ben-10122015042951.html/ben-620.jpg>