

Post-National-Assembly Session Press Conference

(30 March 2020 — Extensive Excerpt and Unofficial Translation)



Firstly, Cabinet Reshuffle – a Normal Procedure of the Royal Government

Today I have a necessity to talk to the Cambodian people as well as to national and subnational level authorities and you the media have already followed what has been happening. You all have learnt about required reshuffle of members of the Royal Government. The National Assembly already voted to approve the list. It is a normal procedure of the Royal Government. I do not think I

need to talk more about it. I am sure some people are not satisfied with it unless they have become ministers themselves. They may have to wait until they have Prime Minister post in order to do whatever they see fit [...]

Secondly, a Law to Place Cambodia in Emergency Required

What I wish to bring to the Cambodian people today is about preparation for a law to

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Medical Volunteers to Fight Covid-19

(25 March 2020 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Sacrifices Reflect Future Commitments to Serve People

I am so happy today to meet with our medical volunteers who have determined to fight against Covid-19. I would also take this opportune moment to send a message to our people in the whole country [...] (Covid-19) is an invisible enemy. We do not know where they are. They are invisible. Your determination and courage is invaluable. I wish to take this moment to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to you personal-

ly but also to your parents/families for granting their permissions for you to take up this solemn duty. It has clearly reflected your commitments to the future to serve our people truly [...]

We have recruited for the first batch only 422 volunteers. I am sure there will be more. However, because of demand of time, we cannot wait but get the first batch of volunteers going [...] let me explain why we need a team of volunteers while we

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NR 55 Inaugurated, NR 10 Construction

(09 March 2020 — Extensive Excerpt and Unofficial Translation)

National Road 55 – A Road Difficult to Construct

Formerly national road 56, the national road 55 connects the city of Pursat to the district of Krovanh and to Thmo Da at the border with Thailand. The engineering team of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces under the command of Gen. Kvan Siem first rebuild this road in laterite. In two years, flood blew it off. As we are focussing on infra-

structural development, we have placed national road 55 in projects seeking financial assistance from the People’s Republic of China [...] we are lucky to have found peace. Without peace, we would not be able to bring about development. Whilst so, we also have found a good partner – the People’s Republic of China, who always support us in our endeavours for socio-economic development,
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Vanda Institute Graduation

(10 March 2020 — Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

Spending Helps in Bad Time

I have said already what I should about fear. I have no right to tell people to go fearless. Some have purchased food and stuff to fill their stocks [...] well, since I could not prohibit them, they may do whatever they

think is best. It is a good thing too because we have so much rice waiting to be sold. It would be nice that they buy rice and store at home [...] only sellers should not jack up prices [...] to look at it another way, in slow economic situation, spending is one way to stimulate it.

Sixth River Festival

(14 March 2020 — Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

In addition to the prepared text, addressing the sixth river festival in the province of Battambang, Samdech Techo Hun Sen made the following impromptu comments:

To Build a Road between Battambang and Siem Reap Provinces

[...] this morning, I had a cordial meeting with roughly 2,000 (provincial) officials and I have pinned our focus on two major topics. Firstly, we are making efforts to build a road between Battambang and Siem Reap provinces, while currently travelers have to go up to Banteay

What we are afraid of is when people do not spend [...] I agree with what Minister of Information said the other day about how many lives would be saved should people are concerned about traffic accident as they are to Covid-19 [...]

Each Individual, Family, Community Exercise Sanitation and Hygiene

I have listed to the Ministry of Health different scenarios (at the annual health review conference) [...] and need to have courage to fight back fake news
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place the country in the state of emergency, whenever is necessary. Last week, I talked to medical volunteers about whether we needed to have a law about emergency and I also studied possibility to implement Article 22 of the Constitution. We now have our draft law. I will lead a permanent Cabinet leadership meeting tomorrow – March 31, to review the law once more before we are going to have it before the Cabinet full session on Friday. Why do we need to have this law? Let me assure our people that they should not worry about (this law is going to) close Cambodia, to put into force martial law, and so and so. We just needed to have law ready and in our hand [...]

We do not have yet a law that will enable us control situation when the country is in emergency. We needed to have a law. It may or may not be a question of wanting it or needing it, we must have a law as tool at hand for smooth state procedure. Article 22 mentioned briefly that should the country face with disasters, HM the King, with consent of the Prime Minister, President of the National Assembly and the Senate, declares state of emergency. However, what would be the coverage, degree and measures of this provision? The Royal Decree cannot enforce punishment. For instance, we prohibit any concentration of more than ten people. If people do not abide by the prohibition, what law would be for us to punish them? [...]

Emergency – When Police and Military Police Could Keep Things under Control

Since 1993, as a ruler who has been in power without interruption, I never ever thought of writing such law. Now, situation has required us to review what has been happening in the world. No countries, except China, has achieved detent in the fight against this (Covid-19) infection [...]. Countries are taking own measures, and some have even used police and military forces [...]. Let me affirm with our people, business peo-

ple and investors inside and from abroad, and tourists expecting to visit Cambodia after Covid-19 that it is very unlikely, though we are going to have the law, that we will exercise it.

Rather, we would have it in hands for a time when things go uncontrollable by state power. When police and military police could not keep things under control, it would be an emergency. There would need to allow the military to come in or we call it martial law. However, I wanted our people to have peace of mind because the Royal Government has not yet prohibited our people from gathering of three or five like in other countries. As I wanted our people to continue socio-economic life, we are asking not to have big gathering. [...]

6 April – Emergency Law Goes to National Assembly

As I proclaimed on 24 March about there should be a law about placing the country under emergency, lawyers have had it prepared. Usually, the draft law would go into inter-ministry meeting chaired by Deputy Prime Minister/Ministers and with representatives coming from concerned ministries before going to the Cabinet meeting. Owing to its special requirement, the draft law will go to a pre-Cabinet review meeting led by Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers, plus some lawyers. On coming Friday, we will seek approval of the Cabinet in its full session. I hope that the National Assembly will, after receiving the draft law, quickly work on it and pass it on to the Senate and the Constitutional Council, and finally to HM the King [...]

Some have said that there is no need to place the country under emergency but we should consider practicing curfew. Let me tell them that a curfew is only a small part in the emergency law. I thank them for their ideas but I find this suggestion lack of knowledge about the Constitution and law in general. Prime Minister cannot order for a curfew. There has to have a law, which is one among many other

tools [...] we will not overlook Constitutionality in writing this law [...]. Analysts should also comment the Royal Government would use the law to shut the mouths of those in the opposition, who have their opinion expressed but never have people's life in their minds [...]

Thirdly, Export No More Paddy and White Rice from 5 April 2020

The third point I wanted to talk about is my order to stop exporting paddy and white rice temporarily, except aromatic rice, for local consumption until further notice. The practice will go into action on 5 April 2020. Most of our paddy/white rice sell to Vietnam and Thailand. We continue to allow exporting aromatic rice since there is not high demand for it inside the country. Most of our people are using lower quality rice in their daily consumption. The high quality rice we exported to markets in Europe, China, and other countries [...]. Why 5 April? We keep a period of one week for our people and traders to complete their selling/buying deals to either Vietnam or Thailand. They must export what they have sold/purchased.

There is a need to store rice at people's household level and by rice mills. The Ministry of Economy and Finance will continue to monitor and assess this situation to provide rice mills with fund to purchase rice from our people for storing purpose. While we no longer allow export to Vietnam or Thailand, our rice mills must act in their places to purchase rice at a maintained price from our people. I have placed my order for Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance Aun Pommoniroth to look into the matter [...]. We needed to ensure food security in our country and I do not talk about corn or cassava or bean, but rice [...]. Let me reaffirm that rice mills must purchase rice from our people who harvested rice at a fair price. They must not underprice it [...]

Fourthly, Casino Closed on 1 April 2020

Fourthly, all casinos will close from 23:59 hours on 1 April 2020. Why do we leave it until 1 April to close them? The issue would not be about those who go there but those who work there [...] we gave this task to the Ministry of Economy and Finance to work with Casinos owners to figure out how to go about it, for instance, they may have to be free of income payment obligation in the closing period. That we are closing down casinos today does not mean we are taking a posting by someone on Facebook. Let me tell him that we have planned for this press conference since yesterday and what happened now is just a coincidence [...] I am asking every casinos owners to resolve things needed to with their workers at this time of suspension. It is just a temporary suspension. Once the infection subsided, operation returned [...]

Fifthly, Confiscate/Destroy WHO Unrecognized Covid-19 Test Kits

Fifthly, I have issued an order to confiscate tools and medicines on sale without recognition of the Ministry of Health of Cambodia and of the World Health Organization. Yesterday we confiscated what they called Covid-19 test kits. Search must continue. Whatever is out there without recognition of the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization must be confiscated and destroyed. I am calling on traders not to cause more problem while they are not sure about their products on sale [...]. Those test kits are not certified. I am calling on people not to allow themselves to believe those cheaters. It would take hours to have a test result even with the Institut Pasteur [...]

Please do not fool our people that this or that medicine would cure Covid-19 because no one in this world and the World Health Organization too have affirmed there is a vaccine to it [...] my order is absolute and there is no more talk about it. Whoever goes online about it, we must arrest him/her and

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already have over 20,000 medical professionals/staff already. Among them, about 2,000 have been working in contagious diseases departments and we have dispatched them everywhere in the country. They worked not only with Covid-19 but also with other infectious diseases such as bird flu, etc. [...] in addition to these we will have helps from medical commissions of the ministry of national defense and the ministry of interior's national police. Recruiting volunteers was a preparation in advance and for them to get themselves ready [...]

Making 3,000 Rooms Available

We have now made available over 3,000 rooms – be they from hotels, hostels, and school buildings, in the whole country for (the fight against Covid-19). Most of them are hostels, newly built for teachers, since they have required infrastructures such as electricity and running water [...] in Phnom Penh, we have this Great Duke hotel, the Khmer-Soviet hospital, the Chak Angrar hospital, and the Military hospital of Preah Keto Mialia [...]

As of this moment, Cambodia has had 93 cases of (Covid-19) infection. According to the data collated by the Ministry of Health, we have had 91 cases. However, the governor of Preah Sihanouk province informed me of another two French tourists infected there. There are now 36 infected cases in Preah Sihanouk, where one of them recovered, one sent to Phnom Penh, and 34 receive treatments in quarantine at the Independent Hotel [...]

Five Leakages in the Fight against Covid-19

We have come through two stages already in this fight. The first stage was to prevent disease from importing to Cambodia. We are doing this job at every exit/entries points – land, water and air. We have been successful for two months [...] it was quite unfortunate that a Japanese citizen traveling from

Japan to Vietnam, to Siem Reap, to the Philippine, to Thailand, and back to Siem Reap, to Vietnam, found to be infected while he was back in Japan. That incident led to a Cambodian man infected in Siem Reap [...]

A small cruise ship came from Ho Chi Minh City arrived in Phnom Penh and went up to Kompong Cham province. The case had brought about suspicion on Vietnam side that Cambodia was a source of transmitted disease, while the two Britons were on a plane to Hanoi and took the cruise from Ho Chi Minh City to Cambodia [...]

Thirdly, the husband and the four-month old baby of a French couple traveling via Singapore tested positive of Covid-19. It has now transmitted to the mother as well. A Canadian director of a school and a Belgian colleague also tested positive [...]

Fourthly, Cambodians returning from a religious ceremony in Malaysia [...] 79 in all, 23 of them have come with Covid-19. One of them also transmitted to his wife in Battambang province [...], and

Fifthly, we have this group of 34 French tourists in the province of Preah Sihanouk. It is our major concern here. In addition to these, some 15,000 Cambodian workers in Thailand showed up at the borders. This has brought our situation to a point that we must act [...]

Foreign Nationals Infected Receive Treatments Free of Charges

That has been the situation of our work to protect the country firstly from imported cases. We have also refrained from issuing visas to six countries – US, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Iran [...] those 34 French tourists arrived before we set out the guideline. They could not go back. France is closed. Let me declare that whoever infected in our country, we will spend for their treatments [...] Cambodia is doing a bit different from Vietnam. Though poor, it would provide treat-

ments free of charges. It is our policy. It is also our obligation as host. They could not go back and it would not be viable for everyone to get their treatment costs covered [...]

Unexpected Letter from Ted Yoho

I could not have imagined that a member of the house of the representatives of the US, Ted Yoho, who designed a law to punish Cambodia, wrote me a letter directly thanking me for helping American citizens – more than 600 of them stranded in Westerdam cruise ship. That is a virtue of a politician. S/he may do so. They would not behave as Brad Adams (of the Asian division of Human Rights Watch) [...] President Trump also wrote a letter. He also wrote on Twitter his feeling and thanked Cambodia [...]

Evacuate No Cambodian Students

On another front, we are not going to move our students out of China, Korea, ASEAN, and countries where there have been (Covid-19) outbreak, including the US and European countries. We made correct decision not to evacuate students in China, we are going to do the same [...] please contact students I heard are preparing to come over from America. They should stay there with them. Do not run away from the Americans, the Chinese, the French [...]. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs work on evacuating no students to Cambodia [...]

Monitor Cambodian Workers Returned from Thailand

Another urgent task is to follow up workers coming back from Thailand. The provincial authority must get to them at their homes. I saw that they used every means – including mobile speakers, to get messages over to them. We must ensure that people coming back from Thailand are not fearful of being in isolation. They may stay in isolation at home. They should stay away from their families' members as well. If they have symptoms, we would put them

in quarantine in our designated places [...]

Go to No Meetings Abroad, Cancel International Meetings in Cambodia

We also will cancel sending our officials to meetings abroad and cancel every international meetings convened in Cambodia. They have sought to reschedule the Olympic event (in Japan) to be held in August. Even if Japan decided to go ahead according to plan, countries will not send their sportsmen/women to the event. ASEAN also postpone its summit. We are also looking at the possibilities of rescheduling our hosting of the Asia-Europe Meeting from 2020 to 2021, for instance [...]

Work with Thailand for Safe and Health-Monitoring Return of Workers

We must continue to cooperate with Thailand for our workers to return home safely and in an orderly manner that we can monitor their health. Authorities along the border must take up responsibilities. Those who have already entered the country we are seeking for them to their homes. For those who have yet to come, I have delegated tasks to Samdech Krola Haom Sar Kheng (of interior) to command provincial authorities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to work with Thailand, the Ministry of Labor to work with our workers and the Ministry of Health to monitor their health [...]

Closely Monitor at Airports, Quarantine and Treatment as Needed

We will work to prevent importation of infection cases. For airports where there are still flights schedules we must closely monitor and impose strict requirement for health certification on whatever flight they may take. We now have only flights from China, Korea and Japan [...] and Qatar. Those found with suspicious symptoms must go into designated places. We take up responsibility. We cannot ask them to re-

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especially connectivity infra-structures.

Besides, as reported by Senior Minister Sun Chanthol, there are quite some engineering challenges because the road has had to go up and by sides of mountains [...] in some instances they had to trim off up to 60 meters slope [...] the national road 10 will also be one with engineering challenges. [...] Since I do not have much time, today I cannot travel by car to observe the engineering genius of national road 55 [...] however, I keep it in my mind and nurture a wish that one day will take a drive from Pursat city through to Thmo Da to visit our people along the way [...]

We are to continue discussing with Thailand to open this connectivity. I discussed with Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha [...] I would ask Deputy Prime Ministers Samdech Pich-eay Sena Tia Banh of defence, Samdech Krola Haom Sar Kheng of Interior, HE Prak Sokhon of foreign affairs and international cooperation, to take note on this and always bring this international pass up in negotiation with Thailand. We wanted national road 55 to connect Pursat by road to Trat province of Thailand [...] the road would help facilitate trade flow. The two countries have a volume of trade roughly 7 billion USD. This new pass would surely increase trade activities between Cambodia and Thailand. More tourists and health activities would rise. It is mutual benefits for between neighbours [...]

Veal Veng – Krovanh Mountain Line – Rarely Controlled by Formers Governments

I have a great pleasure to join with all of our Buddhist monks and people, the Chinese extraordinary and plenipotentiary Ambassador Wang Wentian to the Kingdom of Cambodia, [...] to put into official use the national road 55 – 182 Km, and to break the ground to build a new national road 10 – 198 km. We should really thank peace here. Let me tell you a little bit about

this part of the country and connectivity in the area. [...] from this area, one can proceed to Oral of Kompong Speu province, to Koh Kong province, to the mountain line of Krovanh, and also to Samlaut, Pailin, where in general governments of previous generations were rarely in controls.

Even when the French came to control (Cambodia) for nearly 100 years [...] or when Japan fought with France here, they did not have chance to control it. After 1954, this area was peaceful for a brief moment and returned to occupation by anti-government forces. [...] it was rare that this area had had peace and controlled by the government force. The government force might have come in but only for a brief moment. [...] Thanks to the implementing the win-win policy, in 1996, the area had come to peace and contributed to land territorial unity. [...]

Win-win Monuments – Historic Recordings

In 1998, I issued a sub-decree to create a new district – Veal Veng, which formerly was part of the district of Krovanh. That is our history of hardships and sufferings not only about roads and bridges but also about war and peace [...] it had not been easy to achieve peace [...] we are conducting studies in this area in order to streamline what we knew about it. Ee Chhien (a former commander of the Khmer Rouge) is also here today [...] we will build more monuments here, and other places, to commemorate win-win policies from Samlaut to Ta Sanh, Pailin, Komreang, Phnom Proeuk, Mealai, and to Anlong Veng. We must build them as records of our history to the awareness of our children and grandchildren. Once we are gone, history will tell people and younger generation what happened [...]

Who Would Help Build Over 3,000 Km Roads?

Through HE Wang Wentian, I express my sincere thanks to the government of the People's Republic of China for always

providing financial assistance for our road projects [...] in Banteay Meanjei the other day I asked were there no China help, would anyone else come to help us? If China were not here to do it, who would help build it? I have said it that Cambodia have had assistances from Japan, ADB, South Korea, World Bank, and other actors, however, the more than 3,000 Km roads that we are using and under construction, who would help do it? [...] Let me have your attention, Veal Veng is a district where there are more landmines in Pursat [...] I declared two goals to turn former battlefields into marketplaces and development areas and to transform borderline as one of peace, friendship, and cooperation. As for the first goal, we have made it happened in 90% of the places. The rest 10% is where we needed to remove mines and UXOs. Studies have pointed there are still many mines in this area. That is the consequence of war. Let us protect peace together and allow no war from recurring in our country [...]

Schools Closed, Sangkranta Event Called Off, River Festival On

As Cambodia has found now one case of Covid-19, as I have predicted [...] it would fall now on to Scenario 2 that I talked about at the Health Annual Conference [...] we have declared the case in a transparent manner. A 38 years old Cambodian man infected. I have ordered provisional closing of over 110 schools of every levels in the city of Siem Reap. Schools of vocational training are also closed. We also called off the preparation for Sangkranta event (in Siem Reap).

I thank the medical staff for their efforts in every way to help identify the case. It has been courageous that the infected man's wife came out on Facebook declaring, after having her sample tested, that she is negative. I am calling on everyone in Siem Reap to take precautionary measures [...] we continue to search for people in

contact with the man [...] I think that I will visit Siem Reap to allay fear as some have got to their extremes to stock up food and drinks [...] on Saturday, I will travel to Battambang for the river festival. I will have lunch there. Maybe we can have a meeting with commune/Sangkat councillors/heads. I will stay there one night [...]

VNA Published Unbalanced News on Cambodia

Last Saturday and Sunday, I had to react on an unbalanced news by Vietnamese News Agency (VNA) about Cambodia [...] I asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to file a protest to Vietnam, not the government but to VNA [...] according to the Vietnamese Embassy, the health committee of Vietnam's instruction was to exercise safety at exit/entry points on every nationalities. VNA ran a news to restrict citizens coming from Europe and Cambodia. Saying that meant Vietnam classified Cambodia as aliens. I disapproved [...] I told them if they do not correct it I would lodge a diplomatic note. I told the Vietnamese embassy this could have become a problem of the Cambodian people reacted. If they ask close border with Vietnam and let no Vietnamese in, it could have been a disaster on both sides [...]

The health committee of Vietnam, in its instruction, did not mention Cambodia or Europe, but VNA added them in its Vietnamese and in English editions [...] I thank the Vietnamese Ambassador for his help to get the state-run VNA to correct this issue. I am speaking in my capacity as a Cambodian leader. As far as I know, besides VNA, there are some other media outlets running news about Cambodia allowing tourists in and they seemed to have pinned that risks come from Cambodia. I disapproved [...]

WHO Principle – Treatment Where Infection Happened

[...] According to WHO principle, infection must take treatment where it takes place. We

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Meanjei in order to get to Siem Reap from Battambang, that will shorten traveling distance by 69 Km. It will be a new connectivity project of our road lines in the country. It should be one of our 2021 potential projects. Once we have completed the feasibility study, we will start looking for funding source. The road will be an important link for Battambang, and/or Siem Reap, in addition to Battambang's connectivity by roads to Banteay Meanjei, Pailin, Pursat and even to Koh Kong provinces [...]

To Rebuild the Battambang Airport for Future Development Requirements

Secondly, we must carry out a feasibility study to maintain the airport of Battambang. We may not need it at this moment but for the time to come, we will have demand for air traffics/transports. I am asking governor of the Battambang province, and Samdech Krola Haom Sar Kheng, to take care issues of land management. High building must not allow in the airport area because they would cause problems to landing/taking off paths. Though it may not be becoming an international airport, with growing development, we would certainly have demand for means of air transports. We must have local flights. We must pursue this vision to have the airport of Battambang redeveloped to respond to future demand for development. The airport should be able to cater for planes and helicopters [...]

Battambang's Potentials in Agriculture and Industry

As said by Minister of Tourism Thong Khon and Governor Nguon Ratanak, three sectors (of economic activities) – agriculture, industry and services contribute to national production [...] before coming here, I visited the cement factory (which has the ability to) produce up to two million tons of cement. I also have seen other factories' productions through the exhibitions that I saw just now. I think that besides impact

on service sector, mainly tourism, Battambang's agriculture and industry would suffer little or nothing from Covid-19 and/or EBA, as we would not sell cement to Europe, anyway [...]. I am calling on local authorities to work closely with those from national levels to act on infrastructural development – roads and airports. Local government also have to provide national competent authorities on these efforts as well. Local government must ensure management of land in and around the airport and work on resolving impact from road project between Battambang and Siem Reap provinces [...]

China – No Long Covid-19 Epicenter

As of 5pm today, 146 countries and territories in the world [...] have suffered Covid-19 infection. It is not China anymore but countries in Europe that becomes the epicenter of Covid-19 as declared by the World Health Organization. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I am extending from here my heartfelt congratulation to the People's Republic of China (PRC) for the efforts and progresses they have made to overcome disasters to achieve yesterday a zero death rate yesterday, while many died in Italy. PRC has liberated itself from the epidemic and is preparing itself to help others, like Italy. President Xi Jinping also sounding China's intention to provide help to South Korea in combating this virus [...]

Nothing to Hide about Covid-19

As of this moment, only one Cambodia in Siem Reap infected with this disease. Unfortunately, we have five foreign nationals – three from UK, one from Canada, (and one from Belgium) infected. We may also include (the first case of) a Chinese whom we provided with treatment and returned to his country. In all we have infection cases on seven persons. Some reactionary groups spread news that Cambodia has been hiding facts about the infection. I do not want to argue with any-

one but I needed to clarify it to our people. Cambodia has been working closely with related partners the World Health Organization included and there's no need to hide anything about the disease. Even if the government wanted to hide, how could it? since it would be the person infected who would know if s/he had the disease. The Royal Government in this case calls on the people who have suspicion of infection contact and check with health authorities on their health. Our country is poor but our heart is not [...]

Foreign Embassies Should Comprehend

Taking this moment, I am calling for foreign embassies to comprehend (about how we deal with their citizens on the cruise) ship coming from Vietnam and went up to Kompong Cham, on which we found three persons infected with Covid-19. They demanded that we transfer their citizens to hotels in Phnom Penh. They drew a comparison that we allowed passengers from Westerdam to stay in hotel before and why we allow no passengers on that Covid-19 infected ship to do the same [...] on Westerdam, despite a hiccup case concerning the 83 years-old American women, which 72 hours later reconfirmed Covid-19 negative by Kuala Lumpur, there were no Covid-19 infection. [...]

There was a diplomatic staff, I do not reveal his/her identity, warned the governor of Kompong Cham that passengers of the infected ship would protest with placards and post on Facebook. I commanded let them do whatever they wanted to [...] we allowed them to get off the boat in order to disinfect it. If they wanted to stay in or to return to the boat, it would be up to them. However, the boat would stay in one place until the quarantine period as required by the WHO protocol is up. I have the need to take care of not only foreign nationals but also my own 16 million citizens [...] let us fight together with this pandemic. It is true that hotel facilities in Kompong Cham is not

up to their standards but it is better than keeping your citizens on the boat [...]

Travel Bans Issued for Five Countries

The Ministry of Health issued a ban on travelers from five countries – France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and the US. I also saw words of insult about why we do not apply same measures for those coming from China. Have they seen what happened in the US, where they placed their country in state of emergency? [...] Spain, Italy, Germany, France [...] where even a gathering of a thousand people prohibited? Those spreading insults are extremely ill willed and are not fit to be Cambodians [...] we have set the effective date to 17 March for travelers to cancel their flights [...]. Some countries have taken stricter and extra precautionary measures. Singapore declared travelers into Singapore from those countries, including Singaporeans, are to be in quarantine for fourteen days. Vietnam requires those coming from Europe to stay in isolation for 14 days too [...]

Why have those people been so ill willed against China? They keep attacking China. Those of you who have been spreading such insults against China are not fit to be Cambodians. They have talked about this or that nations but never care about their country's economy. Cambodia will exercise comprehensive measures and we are responsible for our people [...] while I said the other day about possible cancellations of UN meetings, in New York and in Geneva, the UN Secretary General appeared to ask the UN staffs to work from home. Football matches held without spectators [...] for Cambodia, there nothing about racism or discrimination but just to act according to situation. We are looking at possible bans for travelers from other countries that have not been including in the Ministry of Health's list – for instance Iran. We are prohibiting travelers from Iran for 30 days [...] /■

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turn. We have an airport at Siem Reap and in Preah Sihanouk provinces. We need not proclaim border closures with anyone. Countries have done it themselves [...]

Eventually, we are seeking to reach out to those workers who have entered the country and have not yet monitored their health to keep them in a quarantine. We must look for anyone in contacts with infected persons and place them in quarantine for fourteen days waiting for their tests results. We have two designated areas – one for putting people with suspicious symptoms in isolation and another for treatment. If they are tested negative, they can go home. The good point in our country is our people are conscientious to do this [...]

Stay Home; Religions and Media Help Educate

People must stay home. They must not go out unless it is necessary [...] it is true that some have to go to do some urgent/important works. This should firstly keep the virus away from their homes and families, and, secondly, they would have saved gas of their car and motorcycles. We must take a break until things clam down. For forthcoming ceremonies where people celebrate their offerings for ancestors, people may do that from their hearts at home. Some may choose to do at their ancestors' places and I would not deny that completely.

Village/commune authorities must seek every means, including mobile speakers to inform our people at homes and in public places. Some factories have provided workers with education VDO clips and voice messages of the Ministry of Health [...] religious persons of Buddhism, Islam and Christianity must take parts in this education effort. It is a good thing that we have today Islam medical staff with us. We do not have division among religions. There is no religious discrimination [...]

We have 30 medical staff from Islam community in this opera-

tion. It would be easy for them to communicate with the Cambodian Muslims when it comes to taking their medical samples. They have same faith and observe similar practices. The media also must help disseminate information and in a frequent manner. The Ministry of Health must produce VDO and/or audio spots and the media help deliver to a wider audience [...]

No Plan to Close Markets, Restaurants, Café, and Factories

The Royal Government already introduced an early school holiday and we are not sure yet if we can reopen school day after the Khmer New Year. We allowed no more KTV, Clubs, movies, museums, concerts in public place. However, the Royal Government has no plan to close markets, restaurants, cafés, and especially factories. The Royal Government will celebrate the Khmer New Year but allow no large concentration of people. It is best for our people to enjoy Khmer New Year only among their families' members at homes. Restaurants, however, must heed precautionary hygienic measures [...] we allow concert but there must be no spectators. Let us have no big crowd of people. We can broadcast live and people will continue to enjoy them. We also have a break for boxing games but they continue to have live boxing on TV. People can still enjoy it from homes. We do not organize Sangkranta at national, provincial and even district levels but we will have the Khmer New Year [...]

No Superstition Does Away Covid-19

I also call on our people to observe no superstition to chase away Covid-19. A message sent to me. I turned it on and I saw people putting up fire to chase, according to what they said, Covid-19. This is dry season. It is not a good thing to do. It is so flammable to houses [...] please do not believe that superstition can deal with Covid-19. In the US, they ordered arrest of some who proclaimed

and sold medicines to cure Covid-19. I must have your attention that no one has yet found medicine for Covid-19 [...]

Contemplating Legal Basis for Actions on Price Increases

The working group of the Cambodian People's Party – including those from the National Assembly, the Senate, and the Royal Government, to help local authorities should consider purchasing masks and Kroma (traditional Cambodian scarf) for our people. However, because of hoarding, I am sure it will be difficult to purchase them. I am calling for a legal review to see if I could order for confiscation of masks as they continue to sell them at high price. We may opt to close those stores down and do not allow them to run the business [...]

Contemplating Legal Base to Invoke Article 22 of the Constitution

I am contemplating legal base for use of article 22 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia which allowed (the Prime Minister) to request HM the King to place the country under emergency. I do not wish to use this option but if my appeal does not meet with effective response, (I have no other choice) but to invoke this article. Article 22 – New (as amended March 1999): *when the nation faces danger, the king shall make a proclamation to the people putting the country in a state of emergency after agreement with the Prime Minister, the president of the National Assembly and the president of the Senate [...]*

We, however, have not had a separate law that specify legal coverage of this article [...] I have asked for a thorough legal study as to what could be covered under that article about emergency. We never thought that we might put our country under any emergency. To do so would reduce civil rights. Countries have already implemented measures using their military and police forces because their people are not abiding by the

rules. Analysts should not interpret the move that “I am seeking way to suppress anyone” [...] no matter what you may say, I have right to protect people from the virus threats [...] I have lawyers to look into this issue and if things turned to a certain development, (I) must place our country under emergency [...]

One Step Ahead Management

As for preparing human capability to deal with the threat, we have here medical professionals/staffs from the Ministry of Health, those from the military health commission, those from the police health commission and our volunteers [...] we may recruit more in the time to come. It will depend on the fact if we are going to need them or not in face of disease situation in the country. We will adjust our management as we go and take a step ahead. Prime Minister in this case oversees the development and operation not only with the Minister of Health but also directly down to provincial governors. For instance, in just one day, we could mobilize over 3,000 rooms [...] our country is poor and our health system may be weak but our thinking ability is not necessarily so [...]

Go to People in Need of Helps

Taking this opportune moment, I appeal to our people to take good care of their parents, older people crippled with chronic diseases and without someone to depend on. I am instructing officials of the Cambodian People's Party to go meet people at local level to provide those in need with rice since they cannot go anywhere. Deputy Prime Minister Aun Pommoniroth, Minister of Economy and Finance and leader of the Kandal province working team will conduct this task. They must go to people with Kroma, rice, canned fish. They do not convene people into one place. They go to them at their houses. There may be 20% of them in a village for instance who are in need of assistance [...]

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confiscate their goods. That would not be a freedom of expression. Am Sam Ath at LICADHO should be careful with his words. What you said was not a freedom of expression. Have you thought about dangers that our people face? [...] If you continue with that, I am warning, you will not go free [...] even if we do not have law on emergency I still can have your arrested because what you do is supporting illegal actions. Supporting freedom of expression about discrimination and intimidation, while encouraging sale of fake medicines and test kits would be a collusion to commit illegal action in Cambodia [...]

Sixthly, Thank Media and Artists for (Covid-19) Awareness Campaign

I am calling on our people to transform their fear and concerns into measures to protect themselves as instructed by the Ministry of Health. I thank the Ministry of Health, the media, and artists for their campaigns to raise awareness about how to protect our health and to keep practicing sanitation and hygiene. I thank artists for their lyrics and music to help with this education effort [...] while we are practicing social distancing and reducing large crowd gathering [...]. We have a figure now that there are over 50,000 people coming back from Thailand. Please keep yourselves in isolation and I am grateful to our people for writing and hanging a notice at their homestead warning they have family members coming from Thailand. I encourage people to do like this [...]

Frankly speaking, most of the infection cases are imported. It is in this knowledge that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a number of strict measures beside what we already implemented for the six countries – to grant no more visas on arrival and through e-visa, to deposit 50,000 USD before entering Cambodia, etc. We have just found a family of four infected after they returned from France. We therefore must

take attention while we have so many of our people returning from Thailand. We all must be careful. Let us not risk ourselves to be sick and spread it to families and communities [...] village, commune, district, province with new people coming in from foreign countries must be targets of inspection [...]

Seventhly, Private Sectors Cooperate

I am calling on people in private sectors to understand each other in their businesses [...] as one private business owner for example hires a location from another [...] at this downturn time the rentee could not afford to pay the rent. I would say they understand the situation and readjust the price or reschedule payments. I am just issuing this appeal because I have no right to decide on their behalves. I am calling you exercise mutual understanding [...]

They should not take extreme measures – for instance to seize houses, etc. The state has done its part as the National Bank of Cambodia has already taken numerous measures already for micro-finance and private banks. For instance, while they are required to have reserve requirement fund of 12%, they now can keep it at 7%, allowing banks and micro-finance institutions to work out with those on loans from them [...]. We are considering a scheme to offer a loan of low interest between 500 or 600 million USD to specialized banks so that they could offer loans at low interests to those who needed them [...]

Eighthly, Fund from Donation to Purchase More Medical Tools/Equipment

Lastly but not least, I thank HM the King, HM the Queen Mother, as well as many other generous beings for pooling so far over ten million USD (as donations for our efforts to combat Covid-19). In addition to what the Ministry of Health has in hands, I have ordered three million facemask, and 5,000 sets of medical gears and dresses for our medical staff.

As a commander in chief on

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Thank Everyone for Assurances

As for the international cooperation front, we have had so far many partners. As worked with the World Health Organization (WHO) and many others. China has now also come with their helps. The medical supplies of over four tons was just a preliminary delivery and more will come as required, said China. These Chinese health specialists were ones that combated with the novel coronavirus in Wuhan. China has a successful experiment. HE Ieng Mouly said that we could ask for financial assistance from “universal fund” [...] USAID just offered 2 million USD (for this effort against Covid-19). We thank everyone for assurances [...]

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did it with the Chinese man in Preah Sihanouk’s province. After taking treatment and recovered, he left Cambodia. As for the Japanese man, while he was in Cambodia, no sign of illness detected. They found it when he was already in Nagoya. That has led us to find it on the Cambodian man. It is high time to act at national level in cooperation with countries in the world. I am calling on countries in the world to refrain from colouring each other or in this case Cambodia.

China Delivering Raw Materials

Let me inform a good news to Cambodian workers. China has prepared seven cargo ships to deliver raw materials for factories (in Cambodia). The first batch came today. The second one will come tomorrow. Five of the ships will discharge at the Preah Sihanouk Seaport. Two will do so at the port in Ho Chi Minh City for factories in the special economic zone at Svay

this front, I must have what we needed in hand. We must make sure our medical staff have everything needed for protection while working at the front-line [...] /.

Parents to Help Teach Children; No Private Classes Allowed

I am calling on parents to save their times and help their kids with their studies. Someone sent me a voice mail about attempts to provide private courses. I forwarded the voice to Minister Hang Chuon Naron. How could they do so when we are closing down schools? We are asking parents to help their children and to do learning online. If they are going to organize private courses, why should we close schools? [...] they are people in the group calling themselves “independent teachers” [...] it is because there was such countering move to our order that I am calling on review of legal basis to invoke the article 22 [...] /.

Rieng provinces – closer than from Preah Sihanouk port. The China side let us know that the seven ships will not transport only in March but through to May [...]

Four Things to Do

However, since some factories have already closed, let me now appeal, *firstly factories, at this period of work suspension, to nullify no work contracts with workers [...], secondly, micro-finance/banks forgo interests for workers at this time of work suspension.* Today, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance will lead a meeting with governor of the National Bank [...] there are less than 20,000 workers who have borrowed money for home construction, etc. and pay back in principle plus interest from their monthly salaries [...]

Thirdly, owners of satellite cities where workers purchased homes by instalments should allow them to prolong their payment plan. Please do not nullify their plans [...], and one more thing, *the electricity of Cambodia and water supply authority to allow workers, at this time of work suspension, to reschedule their payments [...].*

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[...] it would not win over the truth when we all deny it. For instance, they posted Covid-19 breakout in Phnom Penh. We may post telling our fans we are fine. [...]

Some countries, I know have taken measures to forbid rally of over 1,000 people [...] but here I am talking to over 3,000 people [...] the best way to go about for us is to have cooperation among communities next to each other and to strengthen our capability to respond to the disease.

It would start from one person, one family and each community to exercise sanitation and hygiene. We will soon spray disinfectant in Siem Reap and before we know it, tourists will return. After getting all the medical samples, we will reopen schools too [...]. I also ask people to collaborate (with relevant health authorities) to protect themselves, families, and community. People must not hide if they have suspicion about their health [...]

Where Are Human Morale and Humane Natures

While we did this job with the Westerdam cruise ship, I said – “the fearful regional and world disease is not Covid19 but fear itself and discrimination” [...] (I have noticed that) the world seemed to have eroded morale and humanitarian nature as many have lacked responsibilities towards human rights, which starts from the right to life. For instance, while a ship stranded and ran out of food, no country allowed call of port. When Cambodia allowed it to call port, some have discriminated against Cambodia. As of now, I can declare with pride that everyone on Westerdam cruise ship arrived home safe and free from sickness or death [...]

China Delivers Materials to Cambodian Factories

Impacts on world economy have been severe because production lines in China stalled. China plays very important role in world economy. About 60%

of raw materials for factories in Cambodia come from China. Many countries in the world depend on China’s raw materials too [...] China has, however, responded to Cambodia’s call for help. They send seven ships with raw materials needed for factories in Cambodia [...] I am asking the competent authorities such as custom office and those relating to transportation to help speed up the process of transportation. [...]

When the raw materials (arrived from China) needed to go through to and across Phnom Penh during daytime, as big trucks forbidden to enter the capital, we must allow them in. There should be a motorcade to lead the convoy [...] it is an emergency of lacking raw materials. (We needed them) to avoid closing down factories and suspend workers from works [...] every provinces where there are factories, we must facilitate convoys of raw materials [...] that is the fruit of comprehensive strategic partnership between Cambodia and China [...]

Turning Covid-19 Concern to Strengthening Personal Hygiene/Sanitation

With raw materials received, we can ensure jobs for workers and stable production for exports [...] prices of oil has gone down to somewhere 31 or 32 USD, while it was 69 USD per barrel before. Food price has a tendency to take the up curve because people buy and store it. There has been news that in Hanoi, people also filled their stocks of food. [...]

This could be the best time ever to advise people about establishing their habits of sanitation and hygiene. Starting from each person, family, and community, Cambodia will be a clean country. Without sanitation and hygiene, people are prone to all kinds of disease, not only Covid-19. We should turn crisis into opportunity – I mean from concern about Covid-19 pneumonia to strengthening personal hygiene and sanitation [...]

The Royal Government sets out its budgeting reserves according

to different scenarios – if the crisis to last for six months, what would be the impacts for economy? How much are we going to lose? If it prolongs to one year, how bad would it be for economy? How much money would we need to mitigate the impacts? We have reserved somewhere between 800 and 2,000 million USD. However, I am sure the world will do its best to resolve unfolding situation [...]

A 50% Cut on Institutional Annual Spending

Except for three institutions – the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Ministry of Trade, who will see their spending 25% less this year, every other state institutions will exercise cuts of 50% of their spending. We must save them. If nothing happens, the saved up money would not be useless.

We must reschedule launch of construction sites for a while, until the Covid-19 is over. We are saving up to save our economy. We are reserving an extra 30 million USD for requirement in health, in addition to its law on financial management in 2020. We have not spent it yet. If we do not need to spend it, it will still be national budget. We are reserving 800 million USD for possible six months challenges. If nothing happened, we saved them [...]

Cambodia Would Not Ask for Return of EBA 20% Cut

We have prepared from afar for impacts from the EBA withdrawal. They have taken off 20% of it. Cambodia already affirmed that it would not ask for the return of the 20%. I wish those who called themselves analysts on this issue understand. I have already approved plan to forgo this or that percentage of taxes if this or that impacts from it happened for factories to keep their competitive advantages.

EBA is surely to be taken away one day – if not sooner, later. Now we lost 20% of it. We do not trade our sovereignty for the lost 20%. On 1 April, I will

issue more measures in addition to those I already laid out on 29 February 2020 to support our economy [...] if the European economy has a bump, purchase orders from those countries would be less. We must look at the issue from every angles. I have made it clear already that (I will) “trade no independence and sovereignty of Cambodia for assistance or favor” [...]

Persons Committed Crimes Cannot Go Free

We cannot allow anyone with crimes to go free. Prior to the elections, in the campaign period, they talked about change. After the elections, they continued to talk about it. What were those? They had talked about their final assault on 29 December 2013. Finally, it had led to loss of lives at the Veng Sreng road. What would that be? Should we not go for trial? No, we should [...] once the court decided we would implement it right away. No one can force Cambodia to ignore its laws. If there are some who do not like (to see law implemented in the country,) they can go live and serve others elsewhere [...]

Salary Increases Twice a Year On

On 1 April, we will increase salary for the Cambodian civil servants and armed forces. People will see if their salary is 50% less as some have denatured the meaning (of my statement about 50% cut to state institutions’ spending). We will observe increase of salary twice a year.

The first increase observed on 1 January and the second increase observes on this forthcoming 1 April, plus the New Year bonus [...] we are to slow down spending and reschedule investment on a number of projects to save between 400 and 500 million USD to prop up our economy [...] matters relating to terrorism is not over yet. We have right to listen to (phone calls) to collect information. Other countries would do the same. Would you think no other countries would do that? [...]