

# The CAMBODIA DAILY

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## Sam Bith Ill, Lawyer Says

BY THET SAMBATH  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Citing high blood pressure and the need for outside medical treatment, Sam Bith's lawyer said Sunday that he will ask the court to release the former Khmer Rouge commander from detention in Prey Sar prison.

"I will make the request to the [municipal] court Monday to take my client from detention because he is sick from high blood pressure," Kar Savuth said Sunday. "If this happened to normal people, they would die from it."

Sam Bith was charged Thursday for his role in the killing of 16 people, including three backpackers, in 1994.

The former Khmer Rouge commander was reported to have been in control of the Khmer Rouge in the southeastern region and was alleged to have been a deputy of Khmer Rouge leader Ta Mok.

In 1999, Khmer Rouge rebel leader Nuon Paet was convicted and sentenced to life in prison for the killings.

Sam Bith had eluded capture until Wednesday, when authorities arrested him in the northwest and transferred him to Phnom Penh. A warrant for his arrest had been issued two years ago.

Kar Savuth said he would request that Sam Bith be allowed to leave the prison even if prison

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## CMAC Funding Recovers From Scandal's Taint

BY MOLLY BALL  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Earlier this month, Denmark gave about \$600,000 to the Cambodian Mine Action Center—two-and-a-half years late.

"This contribution to CMAC had been allocated in 1999, but was frozen as a result of the crisis of confidence that followed the release of the 1999 KPMG Audit Report," states the news release announcing the recent donation.

In other words, three years ago Denmark and other foreign governments didn't trust CMAC—the government's demining agency—with their money. Now they do.

Donors and observers alike say that, while the job is not complete, CMAC has largely regained the confidence it lost in a 1999 scandal.

Claus Morgensen, Bangkok-based Danish aid counselor, said Denmark finally decided to release the funds late last year, when it decided CMAC had met its specific reform demands.

"By fulfilling the...demands, CMAC has regained our confidence," Morgensen wrote in an e-mail.

Other donors agree. "By our assessment, CMAC has made a very good recovery," said Masuda

Shikahiro, assistant resident representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the center's largest contributor, pledging \$6.5 million worth of equipment for 2002-2003.

The reforms have been "almost totally successful," he said.

In 1999, a report by auditor KPMG finding financial mismanagement was just the biggest of many accusations of corruption and incompetence in CMAC. Donor countries froze or withdrew millions of dollars.

CMAC's director-general at the time, Sam Sotha, was fired, and

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## Lawyer...

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authorities supply a doctor because his client may need a specialist.

Sam Bith will be able to discuss the details of the 1994 killings when his health is better, Kar Savuth said.

Although Sam Bith's health has not changed since he was detained, there is a large worry that his health could degenerate because the "disease is changing fast and easily," said a prison health department official Sunday at Prey Sar.

The official, who asked for anonymity, said Sunday that prison officials check Sam Bith's

blood pressure two or three times a day and are caring for him.

Sam Bith reportedly suffers from high blood pressure and diabetes.

On Thursday, the municipal court charged Sam Bith with terrorism, conspiracy to commit murder, membership in an armed force and destruction of property.

## NEWSMAKERS

■ Cambodia came out victorious against Laos Sunday, thanks to the boxing talents of **NOUN PHIRAK**, **CHEY KOSAL** and **PHAY BUNCHOEU**. In three separate and exciting fights, the Cambodians boxers squared off against Laotian competitors **PHOUKHONG KHAMSOOUTHON**, **AMNADH KHOTTANVONG** and **SATHITH KOEINTHA**. The three Laotian fighters were sent to Cambodia Friday for the International Friendship Kick Boxing tournament, televised on TV5. In the first fight, Noun Phirak defeated Phoukhong Khamsouthon in a five-round fight. In the second and one of the more intense fights of the night, Chey Kosal knocked out Amhadh Khottanvong in the third round. In the third fight, Phay Bunchoeu beat Sathit Koeintha in another five-round fight. *(Saing Soenthrith)*

■ England football captain **DAVID BECKHAM** delighted his army of Japanese fans by taking part in a pre-match warmup in Kobe, Japan, on Sunday. While coach **SVEN-GORAN ERIKSSON** fears he may lose the star for the team's first two games, the sight of Beckham jogging and kicking the ball with both feet was encouraging for England followers. Beckham is expected to have a scan on his injured foot some time this week, and the coach admitted he had fears his captain might not see action until the third group game against Nigeria June 12. *(AP)*

## CMAC...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

UN Development Program Project Coordinator Richard Warren left his post.

Some 90 percent of the staff were laid off. The center neared extinction—at one point it had only enough funds left for two weeks' operations.

Current CMAC Director-General Khem Sophoan was appointed in August 1999 and charged with cleaning up a mess he did not create.

The former military deputy commander-in-chief presided over the virtual gutting of the top-heavy organization as it tried to become coordinated, transparent and accountable.

"At that time CMAC was very bad in the eyes of the donors," Khem Sophoan said.

"I had to change things if CMAC was going to survive," he added.

Nearly three years later, CMAC is still afloat. Its 2001 budget of about \$7.4 million is less than the \$12 million to \$13 million it received annually before the scandal, but Khem Sophoan and others say that's because it operates more efficiently. In addition, some of its old responsibilities now lie with other agencies such as the Cambodian Mine Action Authority.

Donors say Khem Sophoan's guidance has been a major factor.

"Under his leadership, CMAC has made great strides toward reform," a US Embassy official said.

"We are confident they will use our funds in an effective manner to meet demining objectives," the embassy official said.

The US is the top monetary donor to CMAC, with more than \$1 million pledged this year. In

*"CMAC has been very diligently working on building up their image, restructuring and changing the way they do things. The donors are watching, and they are a lot more confident now."*

—JAY STEED,

UXB DEMINING COMPANY

1999, the scandal prompted the US to transfer its demining donation from CMAC to the NGO Halo Trust.

Last year, CMAC cleared 9.63 square km of land—37 percent above its target for the year. Casualties from land mines and unexploded ordnance have decreased by more than 60 percent since 1998.

In March, CMAC held its biannual meeting with donors and government representatives.

"All of the donors offered their congratulations to CMAC for its leadership and management," Khem Sophoan said. "It was the first time" they had given such a unanimous expression of approval.

A new KPMG audit last year reflected the improvement. There are four audit ratings—satisfactory, marginally deficient, deficient and seriously deficient. In 1999, CMAC was rated "seriously deficient."

In 2001, the rating was "marginally deficient."

The audit determined that more than 70 percent of the first audit's recommendations have been or are being implemented. "This verdict is a major achievement," said Swedish Counselor Daniel Asplund. Sweden is the second-largest cash donor to CMAC.

In the wake of the scandal, CMAC first had to clean up its finances, which it immediately did.

But the donors said other things also needed to change, like the center's organizational structure and its operating procedures:

- CMAC staff at Phnom Penh headquarters were reduced from 3,060 to 80, while the number of deminers increased, once donor money started coming in again. CMAC currently employs 2,264 people.

- Accounting, procurement, logistics and human resources were brought together in a single computer system—a major step toward coordinating CMAC's operations. CMAC produced a comprehensive, credible inventory for the first time in November.

- Standard operating procedures for two-man demining teams were reformed.

Before, one deminer with a metal detector would mark suspected mines, while the other

would investigate whether a mine was present.

If nothing was found, the first would come back and check again, resulting in a lot of back-and-forth. Now one deminer both detects and investigates. This change and others have reduced lane clearance time by 10 to 15 minutes, Khem Sophoan said.

- More planning decisions are made at the field level. Demining units now consult with provincial and local authorities rather than headquarters to decide which minefields most need to be cleared. And the units have the flexibility to change course if necessary. For example, if a minefield slated for clearance is too flooded to work on, the unit can switch to another location without having to ask permission.

Donors and observers say more transparency in CMAC's finances is still needed. Coordination between CMAC and its partners—ministries, donors and NGOs—is improving gradually.

"CMAC has been very diligently working on building up their image, restructuring and changing the way they do things," said Jay Steed of the private demining company UXB. "The donors are watching, and they are a lot more confident now."

## Cambodian Deminers Headed for Africa

On Tuesday, 12 Cambodian deminers working for the US-based private company UXB will go to Eritrea, where nearly four decades of war for independence from neighboring Ethiopia have left a heavily mined border area. "This is about getting Cambodians into the worldwide mine action scene as experts and raising the profile of Cambodian demining," UXB's Jay Steed said. UXB has a UN contract to do the work. While demining in Eritrea, the Cambodian deminers will learn to use a new UXB-patented machine that employs various technologies to detect mines, bringing the machine and the expertise back to Cambodia when they return. In June, Sam Sotha, head of the government's Cambodian Mine Action Authority, will lead an official delegation to Afghanistan to give presentations and advice, Kyodo News reported. Afghanistan has been ravaged by decades of war, including the recent US-led campaign against the ousted Taliban regime. It is now trying to set up a national mine action center similar to Cambodia's. This will not be the first time Cambodia—one of the most heavily mined countries in the world—has shared its knowledge. In 1999, 16 Cambodian deminers went to Kosovo. (*Molly Ball*)

## NATIONAL Briefing

### New Dump Opens

Faced with a municipal dump that is both a health hazard and is nearly full, government officials hope to channel garment factory waste to a new dump in Kandal province. Ang Snuol district Governor Ou Sam Ourn said the 3-hectare dump in Kamboul commune is designed to accommodate waste from garment and dye manufacturing plants. The dump will be managed by a Cambodian company, Sarom Trading, that will collect waste from garment factories in Kandal and Phnom Penh, Ou Sam Ourn said. The Ministry of Environment is providing technical assistance, he said. Ten factories in Ang Snuol district will be asked to sign disposal contracts with Sarom Trading, he said. Some factories in Ang Snuol have discharged their waste, mostly excess pieces of fabric, into rice fields, he said. Some villagers simply burn the waste. Other garment waste has been sent to the infamous Stung Meanchey dump in Phnom Penh, where such waste is banned, said Khieu Muth, director-general of the Ministry of Environment. The waste could pollute groundwater, he said. "We have to be ready to handle trash, because there is more and more of it every day," he said. All garment and dyeing factories will be ordered to dump at the landfill, he said. (Van Roen)

### Union Activist Claims Death Threat

Even as his colleagues returned to work, having settled their strike with a Phnom Penh garment factory, a union activist Sunday said he was staying off the job after receiving a threatening phone call. Peng Sydorn, who had been one of the central figures of last week's strike at the Wilson Garment Factory, said he got a phone call from someone threatening to kill him if he continued to stand up against factory management. Peng Sydorn, a security guard, was one of two factory workers whose firings had prompted the strike, which began Wednesday when 850 workers walked off the job. Management settled the strike late that evening, but Peng Sydorn says he is too frightened to go back. Factory owners refused to comment Sunday. (Yun Samean)

By PIN SISOVANN  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Although uneasy about changing the government, Prime Minister Hun Sen has promised to help muster the two-thirds majority needed in parliament to replace outgoing co-Minister of the Interior You Hockry, Funcinpec President Prince Norodom Ranariddh said.

"I have told the prime minister about You Hockry's removal. He said it is an internal affair of Funcinpec. Though he does not want to change components in the government, he promised, 'We all will try to get the two-thirds vote for a change,' the prince quoted Hun Sen as saying.

After months of controversy and struggle among members of the royalist party, Prince Ranariddh withdrew You Hockry from his post as co-minister of interior Thursday. Some Funcinpec members, outraged at the party's poor showing in Febru-

ary's commune council elections, had demanded You Hockry's ouster.

Appointing a new co-minister of interior will require a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. Speaking Sunday, You Hockry said any other means of replacing him would violate Funcinpec rules.

"I made no mistakes. The prince said I have done nothing wrong," You Hockry said, adding that the pressure to remove him was strictly "political" and not a reflection of his job performance.

Already, a search is under way for You Hockry's replacement, but Prince Ranariddh refused to discuss any names.

"I am afraid it will start a new crisis," the prince said Friday.

The battle over You Hockry dragged on as long as it did, Prince Ranariddh said, because he "left it to both sides to compromise." The Funcinpec leader said he only stepped in because the

situation had been getting "more and more serious."

You Hockry's removal came within days of Prince Norodom Chakrapong's announcement he was starting a royalist party of his own to oppose the CPP. Some party members have demanded that Funcinpec take a more adversarial approach with the CPP inside the coalition government.

You Hockry has been supportive and agreeable throughout the crisis, Prince Ranariddh added.

"He respects my decision to remove him," Prince Ranariddh said. "I thank him for understanding and agreeing to end the crisis in our party."

The prince said he hoped to have a new co-minister nominated by the close of the assembly's current session, sometime in July. He said he hoped to heal the rifts in his party ahead of next year's general elections.

"From now on we must talk about Funcinpec unity," he said.

## KR Chiefs Describe Life of Poverty, Boredom

By CHRIS DECHERD  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Associated Press

**PAILIN** - Former Khmer Rouge leaders Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea continue to live a life of freedom but boredom, playing with grandchildren and listening to the radio.

Describing themselves as poor and isolated, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan said they expect to spend their final years in Pailin. They agreed to interviews on the condition they would not be asked about the past or their roles in the Pol Pot regime.

The 45-minute interviews took place separately on consecutive days this month at their modest concrete and wooden homes, located less than 30 meters apart.

"I'm not very happy...not very sad," said Khieu Samphan, who lives with his wife of 29 years and two of their four children, both teen-agers. He has three grandchildren. "I was involved in things that put my name in the story of our country, but that was in the past," he said.

Nuon Chea said he lives without guilt. "What has happened in the past, let it go," he said. "My mind is clear."

Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan maintain their health is fine, but both admitted to being bored. They said they like to play with their grandchildren and help them with school work.

### Khieu Samphan

The homes of the two men are on the same lot, along a dirt road, through an unstaffed checkpoint, about 1 km from the main road. Neither home has running water or hot water.

Nuon Chea has a television, but says he's not an avid viewer. Khieu Samphan has no TV. Both men said they spend hours listening to the radio, including Phnom Penh and Thai stations, local Radio Pailin and the Voice of America.

"I live to advise my children and my family and encourage them all to follow the law...but

mostly I do nothing, because I am old and frail," Nuon Chea said.

He said he sees few outside his immediate relatives and depends on them to survive. Two of his children are farmers and two sell secondhand clothing. He pointed to several large bags of corn seed and said it was time to plow and plant before the annual rains.

Khieu Samphan also said he is poor. "I survive now because I borrow money, or ask my friends for money, and when I get enough, I will pay them back," he said. "My wife goes to the fields every day. I stay at home alone."

## Monks Rally In Protest of Tobacco Use

By PIN SISOVANN  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

More than 600 monks rallied at Wat Phnom Sunday to pray for a smoke-free world at a ceremony held to commemorate the upcoming World No Tobacco Day, which is to be held May 31.

Tobacco and tobacco-related illnesses kill more than 4 million people worldwide every year—more than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined, according to Greg Hallen, technical officer for tobacco control at the World Health Organization's Phnom Penh office.

Cambodia is bound to see an increase of tobacco-related illness and death in the coming years, Hallen said. But that is not its only negative effect, he said. Cambodians spend more of their income on tobacco than anything else, which helps keep the country mired in poverty, Hallen said.

According to the World Bank, Cambodia is one of the world's poorest nations with a per capita income of around \$280. The 1999 National Social-Economic survey found 70 percent of Cambodia's men are regular smokers.

Written signs at Sunday's rally called for the banning of tobacco advertising and asked people not to donate cigarettes to monks.

A WHO statement said tens of thousands of Asian children take up smoking every day. This is partly caused by the fact that most Asian countries have only limited regulations on tobacco advertising.

Some of the ceremony's attendees spoke of their struggles against tobacco addiction.

"I want to stop smoking, and I don't carry any cigarettes with me," Neum Hoeun, 47, said. "But seeing my friends smoking, I cannot stand it."

Besides, tobacco has a luxurious air about it, Neum Hoeun said. And he remembers that during the Khmer Rouge regime, tobacco was hard to come by.

"I didn't smoke. When I had tobacco, I bartered it for other things," he said.

A man who gave his name only as Sem said he is trying to cut down on smoking. As it stands, he only smokes in the bathroom and "when I need smoke to drive the mosquitoes away," he said.

## Report: More Sex Workers Using Condoms

By MATT REED  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Condom use during commercial sex is on the increase while "significantly fewer" men are going to sex workers, the annual behavior survey from the National Center for HIV/AIDS has found.

Close to 90 percent of prostitutes reported that they always use condoms with their clients, according to the survey. That's up from 80 percent in 1999, the last year a comparable behavior survey was done. In 1997, just 37 percent said they always used condoms.

Among beer girls, condom use is lower, with just 56 percent saying they always use condoms. But that is still a significant increase from 39 percent in 1999 and just 10 percent in 1997.

Just 20 percent of soldiers said they had visited a prostitute in the month before they were interviewed, down from 47 percent in 1999.

The survey also found that more beer girls are selling sex, with 30.4 percent of those questioned in 2001 saying they had been paid for sex, up from 25.2

percent in 1999.

The 2001 survey was conducted among soldiers, policemen and brothel workers—members of high-risk demographic groups—and motorcycle taxi drivers, beer girls and karaoke girls—members of intermediate risk demographic groups.

More than 2,800 face-to-face interviews were conducted in Phnom Penh, Kompong Cham, Sihanoukville, Siem Reap and Battambang towns.

The annual survey began in 1997 in order to track behavior trends and to find more information on the social conditions behind the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

"More sexual activity is reported in all groups with sweethearts," the survey said. "[But] in all groups, more people are getting tested for HIV."

The survey also found that karaoke girls "closely resemble" brothel workers in their behavior, and some brothel workers said they had previously worked as karaoke girls.

The survey hailed Cambodia's prevention efforts, which have

caused Cambodia's high rate of HIV to level off in recent years. About 168,000 people, or 2.8 percent of the adult population, were estimated to have HIV in a 2001 government report.

The survey warned that condom promotion and risk behavior reduction efforts need to be maintained.

"Conditions haven't changed. There are lots of opportunities for a rebound in infection rates," said UNAIDS country program adviser Geoff Manthey.

Manthey said a more stable economy and more disposable income in Phnom Penh and other urban areas could lead to an upswing in HIV infection rates, with men spending more time in brothels and with "indirect" sex workers—such as beer and karaoke girls—and perhaps not using condoms.

This has been true in wealthy western countries and in Thailand, which saw a small increase in its HIV rate a few years ago after years of positive prevention efforts.

"You can slack off, but the virus won't," he said.

## Conference Examines Rural Road Problems

By RICHARD SINE  
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Maintaining Cambodia's dilapidated rural roads is a virtually impossible task because of problems associated with gravel roads, a British engineer asserted during a conference in Phnom Penh Thursday.

"There's no way we can maintain these roads," said engineer Robert Petts, who said that other road surfacing materials must be explored. "It's just not feasible."

Participants at the conference, sponsored by the UN International Labor Organization and the Institut du Cambodge, agreed that rural roads are essential for pulling villagers out of poverty by aiding access to schools, clinics and markets.

A recent study found that incomes and school enrollments jumped soon after roads were improved, said Minister of Rural Development Ly Thuch, whose ministry oversees rural roads.

International donors supply the loans or grants for building most of Cambodia's roads. But they typically expect the cash-strapped government to pay maintenance costs, he said. The government did not have any rural road main-

tenance budget at all until 1999; now the budget is only about \$500,000 a year.

"We find that we must pay back the money to build the roads, and at the same time the roads are deteriorating," he said.

Gravel roads, also known as laterite, are among the cheapest to construct and so have been the most commonly used in the developing world for the past 30 years, Petts said.

But they present a variety of problems, he said. Sometimes gravel is mined from environmentally sensitive areas, or must be hauled from a long distance away. Gravel supplies run low, increasing costs. Contractors are often tempted to skimp on gravel or use gravel that is too fine or coarse.

Cambodia has high rainfall, which tends to wash gravel away; it also has a long dry season, so much of it wastes into dust, covering homes and choking lungs. New gravel must be added to the road as part of routine maintenance, or the road must be rebuilt. A typical gravel road in Cambodia costs about \$1,500 a kilometer per year to maintain, said Samer Fayadh, a researcher

working with Petts.

By contrast, a road made of earth can be much cheaper to build and maintain, Petts said. The road is simply raised above flood level and shaped with a slope, or camber, that guides water to the side. The road must still be reshaped periodically so it does not trap water, however.

Other ways of building roads may be more expensive than gravel to construct, but cheaper in the long run because of decreased maintenance, Petts said. They also use materials that are local, plentiful and cheap.

In Kompong Cham province, the Swedish government is funding a trial road surfaced with the basalt found in the boulders common throughout the province. And in Siem Reap province, a stretch of road has been built with concrete reinforced with bamboo, rather than the more typical steel.

The Swedish-funded experiments and British-funded road research should help convince government officials and international donors to look at a wider variety of road-building methods, Petts said. "We're on the brink of a radical change here," he said.