

PM: Nov 3 event over, gatherings permitted

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Health ministry spokeswoman Or Vandine has publicly praised Hun Sen for his handling of the Covid-19 crisis. Heng Chivoan

Prime Minister Hun Sen has declared an end to the “November 3 event”, which saw more than 1,000 people quarantined following a visit by Covid-19-positive Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Peter Szijjarto, and allowed people to organise gatherings as long as they upheld the hygiene standards and health protocols.

Hun Sen also announced that movie theatres and museums will be allowed to reopen, while the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training said training schools in Phnom Penh and Kandal province would resume on Monday.

“I would like to request authorities at all levels to allow brothers and sisters to organise wedding ceremonies,” he said in a recorded statement.

“According to our traditions, from this month to rainy season, especially in the autumn, there are wedding ceremonies. So, facilitate weddings. Just pay attention to the problems relating to hygiene practices and what is needed according to the Ministry of Health guidelines.”

Hun Sen also commended the Institut Pasteur du Cambodge (IPC) for working closely with the health ministry in testing for the virus.

In a letter on November 19, he applauded the efforts of IPC director Laurence Baril and the medical task force that tested Cambodian officials and others who were found to be in contact with the Hungarian delegation.

“This gesture clearly showed her strong commitment to working with the Cambodian government to overcome this unprecedented global crisis,” he said.

He continued that even if Covid-19 cases were surging in the region and the globe, he believed that with the strong support of the IPC under Baril’s leadership, Cambodia would be able to withstand the global threat.

In a Facebook post, the IPC said its laboratory was established in 1995 and inaugurated by Hun Sen in 1996. It said it was honoured to serve the Cambodian government and its people.

“The IPC is still firmly committed to working together with the Ministry of Health in the fight against Covid-19 and other contagious diseases by researching, supporting public health and educating [the people],” it said.

The IPC also thanked its staff members for working long and hard in response to the Covid-

19 crisis.

Meanwhile, health ministry spokeswoman Or Vandine has publicly praised Hun Sen for his handling of the Covid-19 crisis.

In an article, she credited the prime minister for carrying Cambodia through the complicated and dangerous stages of Covid-19 transmission with wisdom, compassion and clarity.

She pointed out that Cambodia has yet to report a single death from Covid-19 and has also had no known community transmissions.

Vandine said the Kingdom had overcome four main challenges to bring the situation under control. The first was the return of Cambodian migrant workers at a time when the virus was highly contagious across the region and the world.

“The second was when the MS Westerdam cruise ship docked at the Preah Sihanouk port. The government treated the passengers from abroad well and attentively. [The third] was how the government facilitated the return of Cambodians who were stranded overseas and met the needs of foreigners who entered Cambodia,” she said.

Vandine said the fourth challenge was the November 3 event.

In a notice issued on November 19, the health ministry said 1,422 people were found to be in direct and indirect contact with the Hungarian delegation. All of those who had been exposed had been tested at the IPC and their fourth tests came back negative on November 18.

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training also announced on November 19 that training schools in Phnom Penh and Kandal province would restart on Monday, as long as they respected the Covid-19 guidelines set by the health ministry.

As of Thursday, Cambodia had detected 304 Covid-19 infections, including 62 women. Of the number, 291 people had recovered and 12 are being treated at the Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital, while another is being treated at the Chak Angre Health Centre.