Gov't Asks for Help in Fight Against Drugs

By SAING SOERTHIRITH AND SIMON LEWIS

The government's anti-drug chief appealed yesterday for regional assistance to stop the flow of chemicals used to make drugs into Cambodia, officials said.

The president of the National Authority for Combating Drugs, Heng Samrin, also voiced concern about Cambodia's place in the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) regional representative for East Asia and the Pacific in Phnom Penh yesterday.

"Recently, anti-drugs police seized [nearly] 20 tons of chemical substances, so this Excellence raised this problem faced by the region during the meeting with the U.N. anti-drugs representative, Gary Lewis," Mr. Samrin's assistant, Ly Khly, said.

Mr. Kim Yan said Cambodia needed help from its neighbors to stop substances from entering the country, according to Mr. Khly. Police seized at the Siem Reap port 18 tons of chemicals, headed for a mailed drug lab in Kompong Speu province, earlier this month. The shipment, as well as a container shipped to Phnom Penh containing drug-producing equipment, came from China via ports in Vietnam and Singapore, according to police.

Raids across Phnom Penh in May also led to the seizure of chemicals used to make methamphetamine, as well as 4,000 liters of a Cambodian-produced precursor tachooding chemical precursors.

"There is a need for close monitoring of how these are imported," Mr. Lement said.

Mr. Khly said that the meeting at the office of the Council of Ministers lasted two hours yesterday.

As well as the transnational shipments of chemicals, the parties discussed community-based treatment for drug addicts and reform of drug addiction and reform of drug addiction, Mr. Khly said.

Mr. Lement said that Mr. Kim Yan told the U.N. representatives that Cambodia wished to further expand community-based treatment for drug addicts, but that this was a challenge with the country's limited resources.

At present, drug addicts in Cambodia are often sent to controversial treatment centers, where it has been alleged that their human rights are freely abused.

Supporters Pray for Mam Sonando's Release

By KYT SOUVUTH

THE CAMBODIA DAILY

More than a hundred supporters of imprisoned Beehive Radio owner Mam Sonando gathered at the Preah Ang Dang Keu Shrine in front of the Royal Palace yesterday morning to offer prayers for his release.

Supporting shirts printed with photos of Mr. Sonando, the group lit candles and incense before chanting a prayer calling for his freedom.

Many of the protesters were members of Mr. Sonando's Association of Democrats, an NGO that has been accused by the government of staging a secessionist movement in Kratie.

"I think that arresting Mam Sonando has an impact on other people who love democracy," said Touch Vanna, 60, Kompong Cham deputy district chief of the Association of Democrats in Kompong province. I came to participate to pray in Preah Ang Dang Keu [to push the government to release] Mam Sonando... He did not commit what the court charged him with."

"When the case happened, Mr. Sonando was abroad," pointed out Sea Sophon, 46, Association of Democrats' Kompong Speu district chief in Kompong Cham province. "He could not have been involved in this case."

Arrested on July 15, Mr. Sonando is awaiting trial on four counts related to forging a secessionist movement. The separatist claim was used by government forces to justify a large-scale violent eviction in Kratie earlier this year that left a 14-year-old girl dead, and which rights groups have said was an excuse to clear troublesome villagers from land earmarked for a rubber plantation.

Now serving pretrial detention at Prey Sar prison, the 71-year-old contracted flu over the weekend, a prison official confirmed.

France Says Devillers in China, in 'Good Shape'

By SIMON LEWIS

THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Frenchman Patrick Henri Devillers, who left Cambodia last week to provide information to Chinese authorities in a high-profile political investigation, is now in the Beijing area and been visiting by consulate staff from the French Embassy, a diplomatic official confirmed yesterday.

Mr. Devillers, 52, left Cambodia—where he had been held for more than a month over his links to deposed Chinese politician Bo Xilai and his wife Gu Kaili—on a Tuesday night flight for Shanghai.

Tristan Dufes, deputy press counselor at the French Embassy in Beijing, said that Mr. Devillers was in or near the Chinese capital.

"What I can confirm is that two of my colleagues went to visit him this weekend, and he seemed in good shape," he said.

Mr. Dufes said he could not confirm Mr. Devillers' precise location, or whether he is in detention, but said that the officials that visited him were from the embassy in Beijing.

Mr. Devillers is thought to be in the custody of Chinese authorities, but no one in China has released any information as to his exact whereabouts or legal situation since his flight from Phnom Penh.

Last week, Information Minister Khei Khemarith said that China had agreed to allow Mr. Devillers to return to Cambodia after 60 days. The French Foreign Ministry last week said Mr. Devillers had agreed to go to China to exchange for certain guarantees, though it is still unknown what those conditions are.

Prior to his departure, Cambodian police officers made Mr. Devillers publicly declare via a YouTube video that he was leaving of his own accord.

Sok An Recovering From Illness in Singapore

By ZSOMBOR PETER AND PHORK SOPHIA

THE CAMBODIA DAILY

A government spokesman yesterday confirmed that Deputy Prime Minister Sok An had been suffering from kidney stones and is still recovering in Singapore, the first details the government has released about Mr. An's illness after weeks of absence from his position.

Phy Sophan, spokesman for the Council of Ministers, which Mr. An heads, said that doctors had asked Mr. An to stay in Singapore—where he has been recovering—for a longer period of time, and referred all other questions to the council's Press and Quick Reaction Unit, which continued to decline to comment on the matter of Mr. An's ailment.

"He's all right," Mr. Sophan said. "The disease is the stone in his kidney. It is removed and he is all right." Thorough Mr. An appears to be recovering from his health issue, Mr. Sophan said earlier this month that he had been told various stories about Mr. An's status including that he has had a minor stroke. Officials at the Council of Ministers have otherwise been highly secretive about Mr. An's medical woes on the grounds that his health was a private matter. Kep Remy, vice president of the Council's Press and Quick Reaction Unit, said last week that Mr. An was in perfect health and "not having any problems."

It is still unclear when Mr. An will return to Cambodia to take up his many roles in the government.