Police Arrest Healer for Alleged Rapes

By NEHM SREY ROTH
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

A traditional healer was arrested in Kompong Thom province on Sunday for raping a woman, and nearby dozens of others, under the pretense of issuing medical treatment, police said yesterday.

Mr. Sam Ath, 32, was apprehended after he allegedly raped a 40-year-old woman on Saturday in Santuk district's Choeung commune, provincial serious crimes bureau chief Chea Poom said.

"The victim has an illness, a gitter, so she went to the traditional healer's house for help," Mr. Poom said. "But when the victim arrived, the suspect told her that if she wanted to be cured, he needed to mix male and female bodily fluids with some medicines. The suspect led the victim to his room and had sex with her."

Police were alerted after the victim, who has four children, told her husband what had happened and the husband filed a complaint with deputy district police chief Kao Vathy, Mr. Poom said.

He added that the police report had shown that Mr. Sam Ath confessed to the rape and also admitted to having sex with another 70 women under similar circumstances.

But in later questioning, Mr. Sam Ath contradicted himself, denying having sex with the women and claiming that he had instead used women working at karaoke parlors to provide him with the bodily fluids he needed for his so-called medical practice.

"The suspect told us that he [using bodily fluids for medicine] was the way he was taught," Mr. Poom said.

"It is really very serious if the suspect raped 70 people, but we wonder why no one else has filed a complaint [against the healer]," he added.

Mr. Poom said that Mr. Sam Ath had been sent to the Kompong Thom Provincial Court yesterday evening.

Deputy provincial prosecutor Ouch Kimlong confirmed that he had received information on the case, but said he could not comment because the court was still trying to untangle Mr. Sam Ath's contradictory statements.

Gov't Counters Rumors Over Sok An's Health

By ZSOXBIR PETE THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Citing the need to counter "psychological warfare," the Council of Ministers’ Press and Quick Reaction Unit released a statement yesterday confirming that Deputy Prime Minister Sok An is recovering over treatment for kidney stones.

The unit, it said in its brief statement, "has the honor to inform the public that in the last few days, there has been disseminating news in the form of psychological warfare and some rumors which were not true in the truth concerning the state of health of His Excellency Dr. Sok An."

The unit, it added, "is duty-bound to inform the public that as of now, the health condition of His Excellency Dr. Sok An is improving and as strong as normal after the successful treatment of lime stone in the kidney by overseas specialists doctors."

"His Excellency Dr. Sok An will return home soon," it concluded, without specifying when the deputy prime minister might return or elaborating on the source or nature of the "psychological warfare."

Press and Quick Reaction Unit spokesman Phuy Sihan added that he would not elaborate on the statement.

Rise in Drug Arrestrs Cause for Concern, UN Says

By SIMON LEWIS AND PHORN SOPHIA
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

The UN’s regional representative for tackling illegal drugs said yesterday that a spike in the number of people arrested in Cambodia for drug crimes is a concern for regional partners.

"We are seeing a spike," said Simon Lewis, the UNODC’s representative for the ASEAN and Pacific region.

The tripling of the number of arrests "tells us something about something, and that should make us sit up and listen," Mr. Lewis said.

Mainly, the spike is due to increased arrests of low-level drug dealers, which could be causing harm.

The 2012 Crime趋势 and Village Safety Policy, intended to clean up localities, sparked a "massive increase in the number of drug-related arrests," Mr. Harding said.

The crackdown had made it more difficult for NGOs wanting to provide harm reduction services to reach and help drug users, he said.

"A lot of effort is being put into the drug control side of things, but there hasn’t been a lot of effort put into the health side of things, it is getting more difficult to access those who have problems with drugs with regularity.

Frenchman Killed During Late-Night Shooting

By SAENG SOENTHRIN AND JENNIFER LIZU

A French citizen was shot dead in the early hours of yesterday morning while riding his motorcycle on Street 256 in Taal Kok dis- trict, police said yesterday.

The victim, 43-year-old Franck Mathieu, was looking for his girlfriend, with whom he supposedly had an altercation earlier in the evening, when he was shot once in the left breast by a group of two or three men, said district police chief Hoan Chay Yanan.

"Our police are working hard on this case, but we have not yet identified the suspects," he said, adding that Franck Mathieu was taken to Calmette Hospital, where he later died.

Mr. Chay Yanan said that the motive for the crime was still unknown and that there had been no sign of a robbery having taken place.

"His belongings were still in his pocket and his motorbike at the spot," he said.

According to Cheng Sophan, deputy district police chief for cases involving foreigners, Franck Mathieu was dating a Khmer woman, but had never had any problem with other men.

"Neither or not this case involves revenge is hard to say," Mr. Sophan said.

Following the incident, several local websites posted pictures of the crime, leading the French Embassy to issue a statement denouncing the publication of such photos.

"It constitutes an infringement of respect for privacy and dignified and contrary to the basic rules of press ethics," the embassy said. Laurence Bernardi, first secretary of the French Embassy, said that Franck Mathieu was registered with the consulate and had lived in Cambodia for several years. She added that in the past 12 months, there have been six cases of French citizens dying under violent circumstances in Cambodia, none of which have yet been resolved.

"The embassy of France wishes that the police investigation will quickly result in the arrest and indictment of one or several murderers [of Franck Mathieu]," Ms. Bernardi said.