



ECONOMY

# NagaWorld Casino Workers Protest After Suspension Pay Cut

3 min read

Khan Leakhena | Tue Jun 16, 2020 7:37 pm



NagaWorld employees gather at the Labor Ministry in Phnom Penh, calling for financial support during work suspensions on June 16, 2020. (Khan Leakhena/VOD)

[responsivevoice\_button voice="US English Female"]

About 200 NagaWorld employees demonstrated at the Labor Ministry on Tuesday after Phnom Penh's sole licensed casino operator stopped offering workers suspension pay while casinos remain closed amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chhim Sithar, president of NagaWorld's employee union, told VOD that the company had originally agreed to pay workers 50 percent of their salaries while the casino was temporarily shut under government order due to the pandemic, but NagaWorld had stopped paying them as of this month.

Sithar said the union presented the ministry with three union-favored options that the

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company could take: pay workers 30 percent of their salaries and loan another 20 percent from future salaries; lend workers \$300 every month until they can return to work; or allow workers to borrow the value of their salaries for 15 remaining paid holidays. Employees who work on a holiday receive 300 percent of their normal daily wages.

“No matter which option the company chooses, we will accept it,” she said. “We don’t demand all three options, but the company can help, so when staff return to work, we will pay back to the company 10 percent of basic wages every month until we finish [paying] the money we owe.”

Sithar said the workers also asked the government to provide them the same \$40 per month suspension pay offered to garment workers because the casino workers were still paying taxes to the government.



*NagaWorld II Casino and Resort in Phnom Penh (VOD)*

Labor Ministry spokesman Heng Sour could not be reached for comment. NagaWorld’s head of communications Dy Seyha declined to comment, saying she was busy in a meeting.

NagaWorld worker Ry Sovandy told reporters outside the ministry that she would not be able to provide for her family’s daily expenses without an income, and the bank has started calling her about loan repayments.

“This strongly affects us,” she said. “Most of the banks do not tolerate [late payments]. We don’t know what to do.”

According to Sithar, there are nearly 9,000 employees working in NagaWorld’s casino and hotel operations. In its **annual report**, the Hong Kong-listed company said it had earned a net profit of \$521 million last year, boosted by a 20 percent increase in gross gaming revenue, which reached \$1.7 billion.

Casinos, along with other venues and businesses, across the country have been closed since

March, part of a series of government directives aimed at preventing the spread of Covid-19.

“Close all casinos both in Phnom Penh and across the country,” **Prime Minister Hun Sen** said in a speech to the National Assembly in late March.

“All casino owners should find a solution for their workers during the suspension of their businesses,” he added.

A Finance Ministry report from last year said there were 163 licensed casinos in the country and the government collected more than \$56 million in annual revenue from casino operations.

*(Translated and edited from the original article on VOD Khmer)*



CASINOS, LABOR DISPUTE, LABOR MINISTRY, NAGAWORLD, WORKERS

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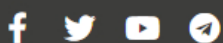
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