

Trade unions hope for some minimum wage increment

Yin Soeum / Khmer Times /

Factory workers showing they want \$214 minimum wage for 2022. CCAWUDU

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With Cambodia having gone through economic turbulence, just like other countries around the world, it's difficult to say in which direction the third tripartite negotiation talks for the national minimum wage for next year will sway.

The third tripartite negotiations with the National Minimum Wage Council commenced yesterday at the Ministry of Labour with union representatives seeking a \$6 increment from the current minimum wage of \$198 for workers in the garment and footwear sector.

The employers, on the other hand, want the minimum wage to be brought down to \$188 a month for workers due to them allegedly having incurred heavy losses during the lockdown or shutdown due to the Covid-19.

The government proposed \$192, taking into account the sharp economic shock and turbulence the Covid-19 pandemic created which severely impacted not only the garment and footwear sector but also many other sectors and workers.

The negotiation talks began with Union representatives proposing a \$6 increment from the current minimum wage.

The outcome of the negotiation talks will be known on September 28.

Collective Union of Movement of Workers (CUMW) president Pav Sina, told *Khmer Times* yesterday that employers want the minimum wage to be brought down to \$188 which is unacceptable looking at the current cost of living.

This year, he said the workers are faced with many challenges, especially the cost of living has gone up.

The employers, he added cannot ask for such a low minimum wage as the Ministry of Commerce had disclosed that garment export had increased in the last eight months of this year.

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“The employers don’t care about workers welfare, sufferings, and hardship. They have many expenses including having to pay for room, food, and loans. The only reason they keep saying is the Covid-19 pandemic,” said Sina.

He said the union leaders had also been reasonable in reducing the earlier wage proposal of \$214 to \$204.

Golden Gain Shoes Factory worker Sina Chan said he had been following the negotiation talks but it was time the employers and government also understand the difficulty workers are going through and it is becoming very hard to make ends meet.

Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC) deputy secretary-general Kaing Monika said the meeting is to review the current minimum wage taking into account the social and economic situation.

Employers have their own problems and issues at this moment of time with the Covid-19 crisis. Employers are absorbing the losses and operating costs at this critical economic situation, said Monika.

Ministry of Labour spokesman Heng Sour said with almost all countries around the world are facing the same problem where it involves employers and workers.

partner for Pakistan and its people, who refer to China as their “best friend.”.

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