

New pay concerns for striking workers as Cultural Village announces closure

13 October 2020 9:36 PM | [Khy Sovuthy](#)



Workers hold a strike outside the Cambodian Cultural Village in Siem Reap on October 12, the day after the park announced that it would close permanently. Panha Chhorpoan



Employees of the Cambodian Cultural Village in Siem Reap who have been on strike for two months are now facing new concerns over compensation after the company announced October 11 that it would close permanently next month.



Nearly 70 of the cultural village's 318 employees have been striking outside the theme park over unpaid wages and benefits since August 14 after workers' pay and food allowances were initially cut in April due to slow business.



Now that the company, owned by well-known tycoon Pung Kheav Se, has announced it will shut completely on November 7, employees are concerned they will never get paid.

According to employee representatives, workers' monthly wages were reduced by up to 20 percent when the global Covid-19 pandemic began taking a toll on Siem Reap's tourism industry.

Klaing Bunchea, 34, a 13-year employee of the Cultural Village who joined the strikes, said he was sad to hear that the tourism institution would be closing after nearly 20 years.

"I regret the information that the cultural village will close on November 7 because I have worked there for a long time," Bunchea said.

He added that he had not yet heard whether the company would provide all benefits owed to employees.

"Especially for those of us who joined the strikes, we are concerned whether the company will provide benefits to us or not," Bunchea said.

He said that during the strikes, he and 68 other workers had demanded a compensation package of about \$5,000 total for all 69 striking employees, amounting to about \$72 each, to make up for their income lost since April. However, the company declined to fulfil their request.

According to the October 11 announcement by the Cambodian Cultural Village, the global outbreak of Covid-19 had put the company in a financial crisis.

"So starting on November 7, 2020, Cambodian Cultural Village will close its business completely," the statement said. "The closure of this business will result in the termination of employment contracts with all employees, so the management of the Cambodian Culture Company will pay compensation to all employees in accordance with the Labor Law."

Lim Sopheak, general manager at the Cambodian Cultural Village, declined to comment on October 13, saying she could not talk about the case until after she had met with workers and the provincial labor department.

Mom Sopheak, a 35-year-old who has worked at the Cultural Village for 17 years who also participated in the strikes, said the company's decision to close the cultural village would have an outsized effect on the workers who had been on strike, as they had already not been paid for two months.

"The company's announcement came as a shock, so employees have not had a chance to prepare yet," Sopheak said. "It has made it difficult for us because we have not had a salary [in months], but the employees who are still working will not be affected seriously."

She added that workers who had not been striking had been offered work at other companies owned by Kheav Se, while those who had been on strike had not.

Mean Mab, 30, who has worked as a mechanic at the Cultural Village for five years, confirmed that he had been offered a new work opportunity at another company under the same ownership as the village.

"I and other employees [who are working] will not protest because the company will provide us all the benefits based on the Labor Law," Mab said.

based on the Labor Law, Mao said.

He said he would consider taking up the job offer after he had received his final salary payment and other benefits.

“Now, we are thinking about the payment, to see how much that we will receive from the company,” he said.

Chan Sokhom Chetta, director of the Siem Reap provincial labor department, said that before the company closes for good, the department will inspect the facilities and meet with management to determine why the park is closing.

“The choice to open or close an enterprise is the right of the employer,” Sokhom Chetta said, explaining that he could not encourage a company to remain open if it cannot pay its employees’ salaries.

Sokhom Chetta added that according to the law, compensation must be paid to all workers, including those who have been on strike.

Lim Sopha, head of the Cambodia Culture Company Tourism Employee Unions at the village, said he had not heard further details on whether the cultural center would commit to paying all workers.

“If the company pays workers based on the Labor Law, it is correct, but our workers still regret that it is closing,” Sopha said. “When the village closes, it will affect workers seriously because they will not have income every month.”

He added that the employees would continue to strike until they received all benefits owed by the company.

Siem Reap Provincial Governor Tea Seiha said October 12 that he had seen the announcement but had yet to meet with managers at the Cambodian Cultural Village.

“I have a plan to meet with them [leaders of Cambodian Cultural Village] to discuss why they are closing it,” Seiha said, adding that the decision should be made independently of the ongoing strike, as it is an internal issue.

“We will listen to them first to see what their reason is. Because we know that a large number of hotels have closed because they do not have guests, so the case for the cultural village is similar,” Seiha said.

Seiha said that if the Cultural Village does have to close, it would be unfortunate for the whole Siem Reap tourism sector, as the entertainment park was the primary destination for both domestic and international tourists to learn about Khmer traditions.

“We will regret it if they do have to close, because it has been open for a long time and it has a lot of potential for Siem Reap province,” Seiha said.

He added that he will negotiate with leaders of the Cambodian Cultural Village to help mitigate the damage that the park’s closure will cause to its more than 300 employees.

“I sent a message to them to keep calm and discuss clearly so that workers and employers can understand each other and there can be a compromise,” Seiha said. “The provincial level has been working to compromise since they started to strike, so I hope that they will agree and will continue to keep the cultural village open.”

234 views

LATEST NEWS

CSOs, Journalists Raise Concern Over Press Restriction, Information Minister Says All Is Well

2 May 2024



Workers Submit Petition To Government on International Labor Day

1 May 2024



Mass Public Support Received For Funan Techo Canal, Thwarting International Criticism, Research Report

30 Apr 2024



“Release Wing Star Shoes Union Leader Chea Chan”, CATU Pleads With Kampong Speu Court

30 Apr 2024



Explosion That Killed 20 Soldiers Due to “Technique Error” As Ammunition Was Unloaded, Army Says

29 Apr 2024



MOST VIEWED

- 1** An Overview of New Ministry Leaders and Their Family...
- 2** Verra Opens Investigation into Wildlife Alliance's...
- 3** Crackdown on Natural Resource Crimes in Pursat Ends...
- 4** IFC Requests Review of Watchdog's Decision to...
- 5** Burning Homes in the Name of Conservation: NGO...

Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association

+ (855) 23 88 23 11

editor@cambojanews.com

#19, St. 388, Sangkat Tuol Svay Prey I, Khan Boeng Keng Kang, Phnom Penh.

About

About Us

Contact Us

Jobs

ខេមបូឌា ព័ត៌មាន

Topics

National

Journalists

Politics

Social

Environment

Human Rights

Business

Opinion

