

ECONOMY

## NagaWorld to Lay Off More Than 1,300 Employees: Union

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Nat Sopheap | Tue Apr 13, 2021 6:54 pm



Hundreds of workers crowd outside Phnom Penh's NagaWorld casino waiting to give samples for Covid-19 testing on March 12, 2021. (Chorn Chanren/VOD)

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

Phnom Penh casino NagaWorld plans to lay off more than 1,300 workers this month amid its temporary closure due to Covid-19 — a plan its union will contest as a violation of the Labor Law.

NagaWorld union president Chhim Sithar said on Tuesday that the company had told workers it would lay off 1,329 employees between April 19 and 23, with names to be announced. The casino currently employs about 8,000 people.

The company had stated that declining income amid Covid-19 was the reason for the layoffs. After several employees tested positive for the disease last month, and workers boycotted an alleged lack of disclosure from the company, the casino temporarily closed its doors.

But Sithar pointed to NagaWorld's continued — if reduced — profits and said the company was taking action against employees for demanding that it **pay out seniority allowances and annual bonuses**.

"We see that the company is intentionally evading it and wants to demoralize employees because employees are asking the company to pay the seniority allowances owed in 2020 and 2019, the annual bonuses and the increase in salaries to employees," she said. "The company has the ability to provide to employees based on the profits that the company made in 2020."

NagaCorp announced a net profit of \$102 million for 2020.

A NagaWorld employee, who declined to be named for fear of retribution from her employer, said she could accept the layoffs if the company was going bankrupt.

"[But] if it is the Covid crisis and the company uses that excuse to lay off employees, it will have a serious impact on my own family," she said.

Workers were prepared to campaign for their jobs, by reaching out to various stakeholders, she said.

"We will post together on Facebook, we will send messages and emails, WhatsApp. Frankly, whatever they have," she said.

NagaWorld employee relations manager Dy Seiha declined to comment, saying she was busy. Labor Ministry spokesman Heng Sour could not be reached for comment.

Cambodian Labor Confederation president Ath Thorn urged NagaWorld to find a compromise in accordance with the Labor Law.

"I think the first [action] should be to suspend the workers to get 50 percent of the payments, or negotiate or reduce it less than that, and at the end of Covid, they return to work. This is the best option," he said.

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If layoffs were necessary, they must follow the law, Thorn said. "Benefits must be fully given to them," he said.



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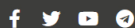


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