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NOTICES

## Telecoms firms pressed to up services as internet use swells

**Thou Vireak and Long Kimmarita** | Publication date 24 March 2021 | 22:48 ICT

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Men use their smartphones at Wat Phnom in Phnom Penh's Daun Penh district last week. © Hean Rangsey

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications on March 23 reiterated a call for the Kingdom's telecom operators to improve the quality of mobile and internet services in response to the growing number of users amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The volume of internet access has seen a significant uptick since the February 20 community outbreak, which has seen cases rise to nearly 1,300 as of March 24 and a transition online among state and private institutions, the ministry noted in a statement.

Mobile and internet service providers (ISPs) are to ensure efficient connectivity and minimal disruptions in, inter alia, distance learning, online work and social-network communication, it added.

"All telecom operators should follow the above instructions with a high spirit of responsibility," the ministry said.

Tol Gnak, head of the ministry's General Department of Posts and Telecommunications, stressed how central these operators are to the concerted national effort to contain the pandemic.

"The ministry understands the important role that telecommunication services play as part of the campaign to prevent the spread of Covid-19," he said.

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Sok Chenda, CEO of Angkor Data Communication Group Co Ltd (MekongNet), welcomed the order and was keen to work with the ministry for the long run to improve the quality of internet services.

“We’ve been cooperating with the ministry, not just recently, but for many years. Take schools, banks and

other companies, for example – my company has increased internet fibre speeds for them so that they can carry out online classes smoothly,” she said.

Smart Axiata Co Ltd CEO Thomas Hundt joined Chenda’s show of solidarity, noting that his firm has handled the increased traffic well.

He told The Post: “We are happy and proud of being able to play our parts in keeping the country connected with their friends and family, enabling students to continue their online study and helping businesses run online when people start to work from home amid the pandemic.

“Recently, Smart has also provided free 60 minute on-net calls every day to Smart subscribers and free 1GB Internet data to our customers who wish to recharge their credit digitally via SmartNas or Smart’s website.

“In terms of our network capacity, Smart keeps rapidly rolling out new sites and upgrading capacity to serve the growing data consumption, keeps monitoring and optimising the network 24/7.

“This year we allocate more than \$90 million to invest in network capacity and coverage expansions across the country. Hundreds of network sites will be built to better serve the purpose of elevating the digital economy of Cambodia.

“We are also working on a daily basis with [the ministry] and TRC [Telecommunication Regulator of Cambodia] to address challenges impacting quality of service such as overcoming restricted access to boreys [gated-community residential projects] and new development areas in regard to deploying additional base stations, removing sources for interference such as unlicensed signal boosters and repeaters, et cetera.

“The current pandemic has shown how much the modern age depends on and requires strong and progressive telecom networks and services, and a leapfrog in quality of service could be achieved by launching 5G in urban areas and by allocating additional spectrum resources to increase network’s bandwidth,” he said.

Telecoms minister Chea Vandeth confirmed on March 16 that the number of internet users during the crisis has increased to 15.5 million, including mobile internet users.

“Nearly one million locations” are connected to the internet via the Kingdom’s underground, underwater and aerial fibre networks, he said.

“At the same time, there are some challenges that make users complain about the slow internet service, which affects the daily work process, as well as online study,” Vandeth said.

The number of active mobile phone subscriptions to the Kingdom’s six operators was 20,481,051 as of the end of May, inching down 0.08 per cent from the same period last year, the latest statistics from TRC show.

This figure is the equivalent of 124.09 per cent of the total population.

At the same time, the number of landline and fixed-line subscriptions numbered just 52,480 as of the end of May, slipping 21.62 per cent from the same period last year.

The number of mobile internet subscriptions across Cambodia’s seven providers also recorded a 2.36 per cent drop to 14,863,435, whereas fixed broadband internet subscriptions across the Kingdom’s 37 providers logged a 33.07 per cent climb to

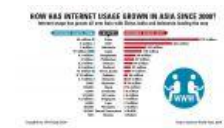
## Internet gateway to streamline security



Cambodia's Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications is reviewing a draft sub-decree on a national internet gateway that would optimise and improve network management and online



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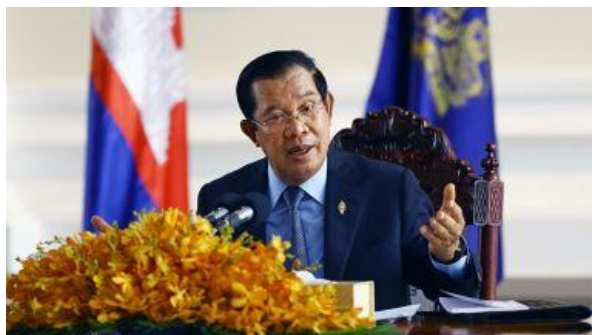
## Global Internet domain names come to Vietnam



## Closing the broadband divide to connect people in Asia

Contact authors: Thou Vireak and Long Kimmarita

## MOST VIEWED



### Phnom Penh placed in two-week lockdown

The government has decided to place Phnom Penh in lockdown for two weeks, effective April 14 midnight through April 28, as Cambodia continues to grapple with the ongoing community outbreak of Covid-19, which has seen no sign of subsiding. According to a directive signed by Prime Minister



### Cambodia on the verge of national tragedy, WHO warns

The World Health Organisation (WHO) in Cambodia warned that the country had reached another critical point amid a sudden, huge surge in community transmission cases and deaths. "We stand on the brink of a national tragedy because of Covid-19. Despite our best efforts, we are



### Hun Sen: Stay where you are, or else



Prime Minister Hun Sen warned that the two-week lockdown of Phnom Penh and adjacent Kandal provincial town Takmao could be extended if people are not cooperative by staying home. "Now let me make this clear: stay in your home, village, and district and remain where



### **Businesses in capital told to get travel permit amid lockdown through One Window Service**

The Phnom Penh Municipal Administration has issued guidelines on how to get travel permission for priority groups during the lockdown of Phnom Penh, directing private institutions to apply through the municipality's One Window Service and limit their staff to a mere two per cent. In



### **Vaccination open to foreigners in Cambodia**

The Ministry of Health on April 8 issued an announcement on Covid-19 vaccination for foreigners residing and working in Cambodia, directing the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and local authorities to register them. Health minister Mam Bun Heng, who is also head of the inter-ministerial



### **Ministry names types of business permitted amid lockdown**

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training singled out 11 types of business that are permitted to operate during the lockdown of Phnom Penh and Takmao town, which run through April 28. Those include (1) food-processing enterprises and slaughterhouses; (2) providers of public services such as firefighting, utility and

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