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Missing Monk To Face Trial In Vietnam

BY YUN SAMEAN
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Defrocked Khmer Krom monk Tim Sakhorn, who went missing a month ago, has resurfaced in Vietnam where he is to go on trial for political crimes, the Vietnamese Embassy said Thursday.

Cambodian officials early last month announced that Tim Sakhorn, chief of Phnom Den pagoda in Takeo province's Kiri Vong district, had consented to being sent to Vietnam on June 30, the same day he was defrocked for allegedly damaging relations with Vietnam.

Human rights groups had claimed that Tim Sakhorn was abducted.

Vietnamese Embassy spokesman Trinh Ba Cam said Thursday that Tim Sakhorn was being held in the Vietnamese border province of Ang Giang and would soon be tried.

"Tim Sakhorn is being provisionally detained by a Vietnamese law enforcement unit pending prosecution under the destruction of political solidarity law," he said, adding that he was unaware how long the detention would last.

Trinh Ba Cam also said Tim Sakhorn was a Vietnamese national of Khmer ethnicity, which gave Vietnam jurisdiction over him.

State-controlled Vietnamese media also reported this week that Vietnamese authorities were

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Kem Sokha Confident New Party Can Compete

BY JOHN MALOY
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Kem Sokha is nothing but confident that his recently formed Human Rights Party is going to make a huge splash at the polls during the 2008 national election.

Certainly, the HRP has grabbed its fair share of headlines lately with a number of high profile officials joining the party and by packing the indoor arena of Phnom Penh's Olympic Stadium for its inaugural party congress July 22.

But despite all the attention, the party's success is far from assured

as it looks to find a niche in the political opposition—a sector long dominated by the SRP.

Kem Sokha acknowledged that his party has a lot of work ahead, but he believes his HRP has an ace up its sleeve: himself.

"We can [compete] because many of the people know me already. My party is new, but I am not new," he said in an interview recently.

"Right now I think that we are between number one and number two.... It's not number three."

In recent years, Kem Sokha has been known primarily as a human

rights defender, but he is no newcomer to Cambodian politics. Before taking up the presidency of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights, he served as a senator for Funcinpec. Prior to that, he headed the National Assembly's human rights commission as a lawmaker for the now defunct Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party.

"Our objective is the empowerment of the people," Kem Sokha said of his new party. "Most of the Cambodian people are poor because they lose their power, and the Cambodians who are rich, it's

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Kem Sokha...

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because they have power," he said.

Kem Sokha said his party plans to give that power back to the people by reducing the number of land concessions and turning the property over to the poor. The party also aims to introduce a steeper tax on large tracts of undeveloped land to discourage speculation by the wealthy.

The HRP has also pledged that if it wins the election it will do away with the proportional representation voting system and will impose term limits on the position of prime minister.

"If you look on the history of Cambodia, when the Cambodian people want to change the leader...they did violence, they did war, they did coup d'etat—they never use the democratic process," Kem Sokha said.

The task of getting his party's message out to the people has been aided by Kem Sokha's new hour-long radio program appearing daily on FM 105 Beehive Radio, but the HRP is still at a disadvantage compared to the SRP, which has similar economic and social policies and a 10-year head start in politics.

To date, the HRP has only opened four provincial offices, Kem Sokha said, and continues to open one each week. At that rate, it will be December before the party has

"We strongly...believe that [Kem Sokha] is playing the ruling party's, the CPP's game."

—SON CHHAY,
SRP LAWMAKER

gone nationwide, and that doesn't include setting up offices on the district and commune levels.

"Time is a very important factor," SRP President Sam Rainsy said of his own party's rise in popularity.

"We now have members of parliament; 2,600 commune councilors; provincial, district and commune councils. This network is what makes a party strong," he said.

Funcinpec Second Deputy President Prince Sisowath Sirirath said he was unsure if the HRP is a party to be reckoned with, though he added that Kem Sokha is "a very good politician, a very outspoken man."

Chea Vannath, former president of the Center for Social Development, agreed.

"[Kem Sokha] knows how to speak the language of the people," she said.

CPP lawmaker Cheam Yeap, on the other hand, found little to praise about Kem Sokha's politics but did admire his bravery.

"Kem Sokha has just a similar

ability in working as other lawmakers," Cheam Yeap said.

"Kem Sokha lacks experience. He's brave, but he doesn't have any strong strategy to win the election," he added.

SRP lawmaker Son Chhay, who was also a lawmaker for the BLDP, said that he recalls Kem Sokha being an ambitious politician, but not necessarily a good leader.

He added that the SRP has noticed how warmly the HRP has been received by the ruling CPP, which has led the SRP to suspect that Kem Sokha is working to split the opposition vote.

"We strongly and clearly believe that he is playing the ruling party's, the CPP's game," Son Chhay said. "[He] does not have the best interests of the country and the people at heart," he added.

Kem Sokha denies that he is working in the interests of the CPP or Hun Sen.

"I can swear...I will not sell my conscience," Kem Sokha said. "I work for my people. I sacrifice everything for my people, for democracy. I know Hun Sen is not a good leader—I cannot follow him," he added.

But the doubts still remain about Kem Sokha's motives for forming a party, which he will have to overcome if the party is to succeed, said Koul Panha, director of the Committee for Free and Fair Elections.

"Some voters and analysts say that [Kem Sokha] divides the opposition," Koul Panha said, adding

that Kem Sokha has never adequately explained why he created a party that many think will end up assisting the CPP at the polls.

Kem Sokha, however, explained that he created his party because he believed that Funcinpec and the SRP have been growing too slowly to have a chance to defeat the CPP before 2025.

But the SRP made significant gains in this year's commune election, taking nearly 25 percent of council seats nationwide—about double what it won in 2002.

Hang Puthea, executive director of the Neutral and Impartial Committee for Free Elections in Cambodia, predicted that if the HRP proves to be a well-run party, it will be Funcinpec—which took a beating at the ballot box in April—that will suffer most. The SRP is less likely to lose voters because it is a more cohesive unit, he said.

Regardless of all the reforms he would like to introduce and all of the internal regulations he has created to make the HRP distinct, Kem Sokha said he is still realistic: People don't really care about political platforms when they turn up to vote.

"The Cambodian people vote for who they trust," Kem Sokha said. "The people know me, the people know Sam Rainsy. The people trust me or they trust Sam Rainsy—I don't know who they trust more."

(Additional reporting by Yun Samean)

Briefing

2007 Dengue Death Toll Rises to Over 300 Cases

Dengue fever has so far this year claimed nearly twice the number of people who died from the virus in all of 2006, according to the latest Health Ministry figures. As of July 29, there were 27,265 cases of dengue in Cambodia and 304 deaths, said Ngan Chantha, the ministry's dengue program manager. In 2006, 158 people died from the mosquito-borne virus. Ngan Chantha said the three provinces hardest hit by this year's outbreak have been Kompong Cham with 4,090 cases and 57 deaths, Kandal with 3,220 cases and 28 deaths, and Siem Reap with 3,619 cases and 29 deaths. Takeo province is the next worst off with 2,935 cases and 33 deaths, and Phnom Penh is fifth on the list with 2,555 cases and 15 deaths, he said. "The situation is much better, but we still need more help. Dengue season is not yet finished," he said. Health officials have sprayed insecticide across the country and educated villagers about how to prevent dengue in their own households, he added. (*Emily Lodish*)

SRP Election Proposal Rejected by Committee

An SRP proposal to give overseas Cambodian citizens voting rights, increase the number of National Assembly members and reform the voter list has been rejected, CPP lawmaker Pen Panha, chairman of the Committee on Legislation and Justice, said Thursday. If it had passed, the SRP draft law would have amended the Law on the Election of National Assembly Members to allow the estimated 500,000 Cambodian citizens living abroad to vote, Sam Rainsy said Thursday. It also would have increased the number of lawmakers in proportion to Cambodia's population and allowed the national voter list to be updated continuously to eliminate irregularities and increase transparency, he said at the National Assembly. Sam Rainsy also questioned the explanation offered by CPP members that increasing the number of National Assembly members from the current 123 to between 130 and 140 would be too costly. "The cost is marginal. There is a lack of political will," he said. Pen Panha said the proposals were legally problematic and contrary to provisions in the Constitution. (*Jeremy Gantz and Lor Chandara*)

Demolition of Kob Srov Villas a Success: Minister

BY THET SAMBATH
AND FERGAL QUINN
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

The destruction of the remaining 18 villas built on land filled in on Kob Srov lake was completed Thursday, an operation that Minister for Water Resources and Meteorology Lim Kean Hor hailed as a "victory" for the government.

"The excavators have destroyed all the villas now," said Kit So, a resident of the Kob Srov lake area whose relative owned land in the Long Chhin Resorts development.

Demolition work began Tuesday, but the destruction of the villas, which were built on an area of the lake filled in by developer Long Chhin Resorts around 2001, did not begin until Thursday.

Lim Kean Hor said the action

taken against Long Chhin for filling in the lake and then selling the land as private property would be a warning to others.

"Hun Sen is ringing a bell to warn those who have done wrongly. If they have filled in lakes, they will have to take it out. Long Chhin mocked the government by its actions [at Kob Srov lake]," he said.

A woman whose relatives had bought five sites on the development said Thursday that a villa they had built was already knocked down and they were "not hopeful" of getting any compensation for their losses.

"This is a big surprise. I hear [Long Chhin Resorts' owners] are in China now," said the woman, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"It is not fair that people who

knew nothing about the land being filled in illegally must now pay this price," she added.

Lim Kean Hor said that the government has frozen Long Chhin's assets in Cambodia and that compensation will be paid.

"People have been victims of Long Chhin and it has to compensate them. Samdech Hun Sen always has pity for people," he added.

Several officials, including Kandal's recently removed governor Khim Bo, have already lost their jobs since the controversy over Kob Srov erupted, and Lim Kean Hor said Thursday more will follow.

"Other district governors in Kandal will be fired also," he said. "Authorities have to be responsible for where they allow companies to build."

Duch Requests ECCC Pay for His Defense Lawyers

BY ERIKA KINETZ
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, does not have enough money to pay for his own attorneys, the Khmer Rouge tribunal said in a statement released Wednesday evening.

Duch, who was charged with crimes against humanity this week and is now the sole occupant of the court's new eight-cell detention facility, has requested two lawyers—Kar Savuth, a Cambodian attorney, and French lawyer Francois Roux—to be paid by the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the statement said.

Under the tribunal's 2004 budget estimate, the UN planned to commit nearly \$4.8 million to lawyer fees for indigent defendants like Duch.

Rupert Skilbeck, the tribunal's

principal defender, said in an interview that the court will pay foreign defense attorneys a net salary of at least \$74,000 a year, though attorneys can claim up to an additional 40 percent to cover professional costs, such as bar association fees and the expense of running a legal office.

The maximum a foreign defense attorney paid through the ECCC can earn is \$11,500 a month—or \$138,000 a year—Skilbeck said.

Those fees were set based on the UN compensation category—a P5 classification, which is reserved for people with at least a decade of experience—that applies to tribunal prosecutors, he said.

The fees the ECCC will pay Cambodian defense attorneys have yet to be determined, he added.

Cambodian tribunal staffers

make half what their foreign counterparts do in other sections of the court.

Skilbeck said the Defense Support Section, which he heads, has collected about 30 applications from lawyers seeking to be eligible for ECCC compensation.

About half are Cambodian attorneys, and half international applicants, who must also be certified by the Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia before they can represent clients, he said.

Applications from international lawyers seeking to work at the tribunal will normally be forwarded to the bar on a monthly basis, and Skilbeck said he expects to send the first batch over next week.

Roux filed his application to the bar Tuesday, after Duch appointed him to his defense team, Skilbeck added. (*Additional reporting by Kuch Naren*)

Military Police Bust Drug Production Laboratory

BY SAING SOENTHRITH
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Military Police claimed their largest ever drug bust on Thursday following the discovery of machinery capable of producing amphetamines, an array of drugs and the arrest of a suspected drug dealer in Phnom Penh.

The suspect, Lum Sokheng, 31, was arrested as he left a nightclub in Daun Penh district early Wednesday morning, and a search of his Cadillac Escalade uncovered 870 amphetamine pills, 47 ecstasy pills, 3 bags of ketamine, nearly 250 grams of crystalline metham-

phetamine and a handgun, National Military Police Commander Sao Sokha said.

Military police later raided the suspect's home in Dangkao district, confiscating machinery capable of producing 10,000 amphetamine pills an hour, 339 kg of an unidentified white powder, 5 kg of a pink-colored powder and another 2.9 grams of white powder found amid smoking paraphernalia, Sao Sokha said.

"It is the biggest [discovery] that our military policemen have made while cracking down on drug dealers," he added.

Officers also found \$95,600-worth of counterfeit US dollar bills and 13 bullets that correspond to three different types of handgun, he said.

Sao Sokha said that law enforcement officials had been monitoring Lum Sokheng for a year prior to Wednesday's arrest.

Dr Meas Vyrih, laboratory director at the National Authority for Combating Drugs, said that his department had heard that officials had made a large bust, but said that the confiscated items had not yet reached his lab for testing.

NATIONAL

Briefing

US Man Jailed for Sexually Abusing Cambodian Girls

A man was jailed for 40 years in the US on Tuesday for the sexual abuse of three underage Cambodian girls, according to a statement from the US Embassy. Miami resident Kent Frank was arrested in Phnom Penh on debauchery charges January 1, 2004, after four females including three underage girls were found leaving his hotel room. Evidence presented in court showed that Frank had paid the underage girls for sex and to pose for pornographic pictures, and he was convicted in April on eight counts of child exploitation between September 2003 and January 2004, according to the statement. The convictions included counts of engaging in illicit sexual conduct with a minor, purchasing a minor with the intent to produce child pornography and traveling for the purpose of engaging in illicit sexual conduct with a minor, it added. Federal District Judge Adalberto Jordan also ordered Frank to pay a \$25,000 fine and serve 15 years of supervised release after he completes his sentence, according to the statement. Keo Thea, Phnom Penh municipal deputy bureau police chief of anti-trafficking and juvenile protection, who traveled to the US on two occasions to give evidence on the case, said police had confiscated over 400 explicit pictures at the time. The jail sentence handed down to Frank satisfied Cambodian police, he added. (*Fergal Quinn and Chhay Chanmyia*)

Police Find Mutilated Body of RCAF Colonel

Police in Kompong Chhnang province said Thursday that they recovered the mutilated body of an RCAF colonel along National Road 5 in Kompong Tralach district. The body of Tim Vannarin, 47, a Phnom Penh resident, was discovered Tuesday, according to Chim Bunthoem, deputy chief of the province's Judicial Police. "The victim was chopped many times on his neck and head, then packed in two plastic bags, put into a 1.2-meter icebox and dumped in my area," he said, adding that police had not identified a suspect. Chev Vibol, a cousin of the victim, said Tim Vannarin had been robbed of a diamond ring, a handgun and other valuables. (*Saing Soenthrith*)

Disability NGOs' Fund-Raising Tactics Questioned

BY EMILY LODISH
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

The secretary-general of the Cambodian National Volleyball League (Disabled) has accused three international disability organizations working in Cambodia of immoral fundraising tactics.

CNVLD Secretary-General Chris Minko, an Australian national who has been working in Cambodia's disability sector since 1996, accused the organizations of using negative images of Cambodians to promote their international fundraising efforts.

Of the three organizations Minko singled out for criticism and against which he has made several other allegations, Handicap International has denied the allegations, Veterans International did not wish to comment and Cambodia Trust has called on the volleyball league chief to substantiate his claims.

In a lengthy e-mail sent to an aid watchdog group and foreign embassies, Minko accused HI of issuing flawed information and of emotionally blackmailing people from whom it wishes to solicit donations.

The e-mail included copies of a donor solicitation letter from HI that enclosed a miniature crutch made from bamboo and a photo of a young Cambodian girl named Mom who lost her leg to a landmine.

"One victim out of four is a child like little Mom," the HI letter states. "Everyday in Cambodia, three people see their lives blown to pieces by a mine," it adds.

Minko wrote in his complaint e-mail that the HI claim regarding the number of landmine casualties in Cambodia was inaccurate and that using Mom's case, which he characterized as a "sob-story," was a tactic that he considers "nothing less than moral and financial fraud."

"There's a way to portray the land mine issue through showing how survivors rebuild their lives rather than portray Cambodia as a place littered with landmines," Minko said last week in an interview.

"It's time to show positive developments, of which there are many in Cambodia, in order to encourage vital tourism which can have a major socio-economic impact on the nation," he said.

Lucile Papon, HI-France's Cambodia program director, whose name was signed to the fundraising letter with the attached mini crutch, said the group's fund raising approach reflected the situation in Cambodia, though she admitted that the statistic of three landmine

"I am exhausted by the ongoing moral fraud taking place in order to raise funds for Western NGOs, the majority of which leaves the country..."

—CHRIS MINKO,
CAMBODIAN NATIONAL
VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE (DISABLED)

casualties per day in Cambodia was incorrect.

HI had not updated their information, she said, and the correct statistic in 2006 was 1.23 victims per day due to mines and UXO in Cambodia.

"I am not sure it's manipulation to say that someone stepped on a landmine. It's reality," she said. "It's used to sensitize people."

Minko alleged that Cambodia Trust's Web site also promotes a negative image of Cambodia by prominently displaying a photograph of a small disabled child using crutches.

"I am exhausted by the ongoing moral fraud taking place in order to raise funds for Western NGOs, the majority of which leaves the country and is not being spent where it's supposed to be spent," he added.

Minko has called for the formation of a body to oversee the multi-billion-dollar aid and development industry, which he says has gotten "out of control."

"There is the need for an international regulatory body to measure and monitor the effectiveness and financial expenditures," he said.

The Cambodia Trust denies promoting a negative image of Cambodia, and CT officials said they have specific guidelines to the contrary.

"CT is committed to ensuring that disabled people are portrayed in a positive manner," according to a document provided by Jan Nye, CT community development supervisor.

The document contained recommendations for publicity information such as: "avoid making disabled people objects of pity or tragic figures" and "avoid presenting physical characteristics of any kind as determining factors of personality."

Pining McAndrew, chief of party for Veterans International—where Minko worked as a consultant several years ago—declined to comment on Minko's claims.

"We would rather concentrate on the work we're doing with physically disabled Cambodians than comment on this issue," she said Thursday at her office on the grounds of the Kien Khleang National Rehabilitation Center on Chroy Changvar peninsula.

Minko also said that CT, HI and VI have diversified far beyond their initial mandates and have become "huge fiefdoms" that do not spend their funds wisely or progress toward local integration of their projects.

"Why after 17 years of operating in Cambodia hasn't there been localization?" he asked.

Mary Scott, CT country director, wrote by e-mail earlier this week that her organization came to Cambodia in the 1990s to provide "clinical services" and established the Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthotics in 1994.

"Cambodia is the leader in ASEAN in the field of prosthetics and orthotics," Scott wrote.

"It is the only country in ASEAN where all prosthetics and orthotics services are provided by internationally recognized prosthetist/orthotists—a result, in large part, to the work of CSPO," she wrote.

McAndrew, who is from the Philippines, said Thursday that she is the only expatriate at VI, adding that their mission has always been to make Cambodia's disabled population more mobile and self-reliant.

She also said that VI's work outside of their three rehabilitation centers is a necessary extension of services because unless you help disabled people integrate in the community, "they will hang the [prosthetic] device on the wall and still beg on the streets," she said.

Bruno Leclercq, country director for HI-Belgium, also challenged Minko's criticism, saying that HI's focus is clear: "to help people with disabilities regain their independence, dignity and rights," adding that recent project expansions are in keeping with its mission.

Leclercq added that although financial independence from donors is difficult to achieve, HI has localized in terms of training Cambodian staff to run their programs.

Minko said that the issues in question are nearly two decades old, but everyone keeps quiet about them. "If this article goes to print," he said, "at least it might spark debate about these issues."

Leclercq, however, said he did not think that the CNVLD chief's approach would lead to constructive conversation.

Tourism Revenue Increasing At Angkor Temple Complex

BY KAY KIMSONG
THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Revenue from ticket sales at Angkor Archeological Park increased by a third in the first half of this year and foreign visitors to the country are up 20 percent compared to the same period last year, officials said Thursday.

Bun Narith, director general of the Apsara Authority, which manages Angkor, said that ticket sales as of the end of June reached about \$16 million dollars, a 33 percent jump from the same period in 2006, when revenue stood at around \$12 million.

"The revenue from tickets is increasing," he said, adding that tourists from Asian countries such as China, Japan and South Korea have made up the largest portion of the increase.

Tourism Minister Thong Khon said the boost in tourism is happening across the country.

"Now we have many other destinations [to visit]," he said

He added that as of June,

tourism across the country was up 20 percent from the same period last year.

The divide in tourism numbers between the low season, from June to October, and the high season, from November to May, has continued to narrow every year, Thong Khon said.

"Just as many tourists come in the low season as in the high season now," he said.

Koy Song, director of the tourism department in Siem Reap town, said that although the boost in tourism is encouraging, few of those residing past the outskirts of the town are benefiting.

Villagers in the area travel to Siem Reap town to work as hotel staff, taxi drivers and laborers, the tourism director said.

But Koy Song added, "people outside Siem Reap gain so little profit because there is a lack of infrastructure and roads leading to [surrounding] villages," he said.

Monk...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

holding Tim Sakhorn.

Vietnam's daily Thanh Nien newspaper claimed Thursday that Tim Sakhorn was a native of An Giang province and had been arrested while illegally trying to enter Vietnam and charged with undermining political unity.

Trinh Ba Cam also claimed that Tim Sakhorn had confessed to assisting the US-based Khmer Kampuchea Krom Federation by providing documents and newspaper articles to help incite anti-Vietnamese activities.

"Tim Sakhorn and other Khmer Kampuchea Krom who wear the Buddhist robe always organize movements to stage demonstrations against Vietnam and build networks in Cambodia to incite chaos," he added.

Thach Setha, executive director of the local Khmer Kampuchea Krom Community, said the Cambodian government was now responsible for Tim Sakhorn's safety.

"The government has deported Tim Sakhorn to Vietnam for prosecution. The authorities have abused the Constitution," Thach Setha said, citing a Constitutional ban on deporting Cambodian citizens.

Thach Setha also denied that Tim Sakhorn had been involved in anti-Vietnamese activities.

"There is no evidence the monk established a movement. It is just an exaggeration," he said.

Kek Galabru, president of rights group Licadho, agreed.

"Tim Sakhorn is a Cambodian citizen. He must be brought for prosecution at a Cambodian court if he breached the law," she said.

Great Supreme Buddhist Patriarch Tep Vong and Supreme Buddhist Patriarch Non Nget could not be reached for comment.

Tep Vong previously accused

Tim Sakhorn of working against Buddhism and last month released a handwritten letter in which Tim Sakhorn appears to consent to being taken to Vietnam and also to thank Tep Vong for his defrocking.

Interior Ministry spokesman Lieutenant General Khieu Sopheak declined to discuss Tim Sakhorn's fate.

"Authorities honored Tim Sakhorn's request to go to his hometown," he said.

In a two-hour closed-door meeting at the National Assembly on Thursday morning, Interior Ministry Secretary of State Em Sam An and Chhay Sinarith, director of the ministry's General Information Department, answered questions about Tim Sakhorn from SRP lawmaker Yim Sovann, chair of the assembly's commission on the interior.

Chhay Sinarith told reporters after the meeting that the commission had requested an inquiry into Tim Sakhorn's disappearance.

"We have reported to the commission and we received a request from the commission to study the case and learn the whereabouts of Tim Sakhorn," he said.

Yim Sovann said both Em Sam An and Chhay Sinarith had told him they did not know what had become of Tim Sakhorn.

"The Ministry of Interior said they had no information," he said. "I will continue to follow the case because the case has affected the government's reputation. It is a serious human rights violation."

Yim Sovann also said the speed with which authorities had arrested suspects in Sunday's failed bombing attempt at the Vietnam-Cambodia Friendship Monument contrasted harshly with authorities' proclaimed ignorance about Tim Sakhorn.

"In some complicated cases, authorities can find the suspects. However, in this case, the Ministry of Interior has examined the case slowly and has failed to investigate," he added.