









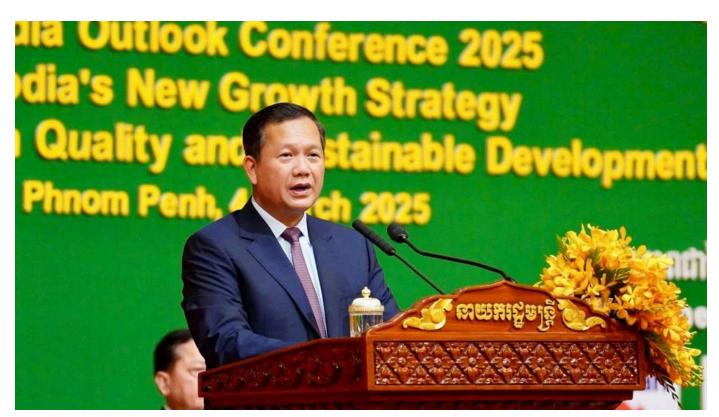




BUSINESS

PM Calls for Micro-Business Data to Align with Economic Growth Reality

Prime Minister Hun Manet has urged research institutions like Cambodia Development Research Institute (CDRI) to conduct in-depth studies of micro businesses, particularly in the informal sector, to obtain a more accurate reflection of Cambodia's economic growth



Prime Minister Hun Manet gives speech during the Cambodia Outlook Conference 2025. Kiripost via Press OCM

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Prime Minister Hun Manet urged institutes such as Cambodia Development Research Institute (CDRI) to conduct research on microbusinesses, particularly in the informal sector, to obtain an accurate reflection of the nation's economic health. He pointed out that reports sometimes do not correspond with gross domestic product growth (GDP) rates.

"We cannot have economic growth of six percent in every sector," he said, noting that some sectors can reach six percent while others fall short, emphasising the need to monitor retail and small businesses. This is especially obvious in the informal sector, which involves the sale of local goods.

He has been keeping tabs on locations where many businesses closed down about six months ago, but now they are starting to reopen, suggesting that the situation does not always correspond to reports or the rise in GDP projections, as the rate reflects performance in the tourism, garment, industrial, and agricultural sectors.

He also observed that while the data on macro business and economic growth was correct, it does not reflect microbusinesses.

"If we want to implement a specific target, we must research [directly] and collect data. It is critical for data collection, and we need to talk to them [public] directly," he said. "Do not use data from the manufacturing and garment sectors to determine what the service industry needs."

"Data collection must be done regularly," he mentioned, "like how the Cambodia Outlook Conference is hosted every year". The theme of the conference on Tuesday was 'Cambodia's New Growth Strategy Priorities for High Quality and Sustainable Development'.

Manet urged CDRI to continue serving as a data centre and publishing quantitative and qualitative research materials to promote research using information and primary data research.

"It is done through data collection and surveys, since the accuracy and consistency of primary data, also known as micro data, is critical for policy development or policy measure direction to be more specific and responsive to practical demands," he said.

The 16th Cambodia Outlook Conference, organised by Australia and CDRI, brought together government officials, academics, development partners, and economic specialists to discuss priorities to accelerate Cambodia's economic growth.

Chea Serey, CDRI Board Chairperson, said the conference this year assessed the strengths and weaknesses in the country, identified key areas which need to be improved and achieved economic development.

"The conference is also facilitated by national and international experts to better understand the challenges ahead and opportunities," she said. "It's to assist Cambodia in effective reforms in the context of global and regional economic uncertainty, which could affect its future development projects."

Meanwhile, Manet suggested that the discussion looked at the global context, including the rise of protectionist policies leading to trade and technology wars, reliance on the regional economy to drive economic development, acceleration of the digital revolution, particularly in artificial intelligence, and rising trends in green transition, such as investment in renewable energy and electric cars.

"In the context of Cambodia, [there] should be discussions on the identification and development of sectors as a source of new growth, preparations to leave the Least Developed Countries category, strategies for the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups, and the development of technical skills to fill the skill gap and meet future demands," he said.

According to the National Bank of Cambodia, economic growth is projected at 6.2 percent in 2025 on the back of rising garment and non-garment exports. However, external challenges such as US tariffs and a slowing Chinese economy could impact growth.





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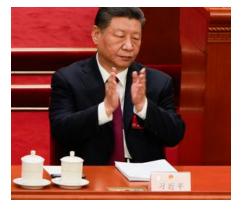
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